







# Ancient India : Culture and Thought

( M. L. BHAGI, M.A., (*Hist.*)

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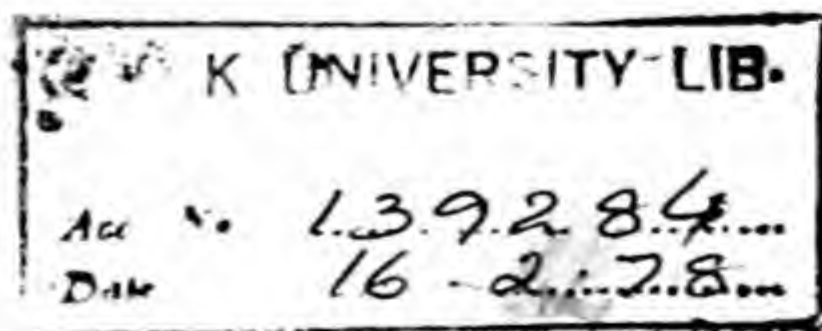
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*Dedicated*  
TO MY  
LATE FATHER  
AS A  
TOKEN OF REVERENCE



## PREFACE

History is the mirror of a civilization. It is the record of the hoary past, which remains hidden under the debries of the by-gone days. Ancient India had a glorious achievement in the fields of art and literature. Since the pre-historic days India strived to unearth the mysteries of human soul and her literature was the product of the mighty minds. The great seers and saints were the architects of that ancient greatness and glorious traditions.

It has been well said that the Indian culture has something of the elusive and attractive quality of the rainbow, throwing various shades and colours although its essence and composition were the same and the one. The aim of ancient culture in India was not only of producing perfect men and women, it had something more to achieve, i. e., its main effort was to bring perfection of knowledge, beauty and moral worth. Culture has always been considered a subject beyond the pale of personal profit and concern and it has been accepted that true culture bears a transcendental quality in it. From the individual point of view, always the emphasis has been on selfless Karma, where the human soul, has been taken as eternal and indestructible. Ancient India made the beginning of the great period of Indian culture in which the pattern of her society, religion, literature and art took shape of its present forms. Throughout the ages it faced many challenges from different quarters, but its foundation stood rock like against every assault. Thus, it heralded its greatness and nobility.

The study of history of that glorious period is always rejuvenating and inspiring to all. Many great scholars have written on this subject with excellent vision and wisdom. Mine is a meagre effort of a great and vast subject whose depth is unfathomable and limitless.

I extend my gratitude to all authors from whose books I have taken help intensively as well as extensively. Any fresh suggestion from writers and students of history for further improvement of the book will be always welcomed and appreciated. I shall consider my labour fruitful if the readers in general and particularly the students of history find the book useful and interesting.

I express my indebtedness to Shri Monoranjan Banerjee, M.A. who took a great pain in going through the entire manuscript. I also extend my gratitude to Shri Babulal Sharma who helped me by giving many valuable suggestions. I shall fail in my duty if I do not mention the name of my wife Indra, without whose constant inspiration and support I could not have written this book.

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The author.

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## SECTION I

### SOCIAL BACKGROUND

#### A. History

India is a vast country and it has been called a subcontinent. In the extreme north stands the highest mountain ranges of the Himalayas, perpetually capped with snow and ice, cutting off the land from the rest of Asia, while its eastern, southern and western sides are washed by the seas. The northern portion of the country is continental comprising the most fertile Indo-Gangetic alluvial plain and the southern portion is peninsular.

The peculiar geographical conditions and the physical features of the country have greatly influenced the course of its history, since the pre-historic days. The diversity of the country has been the outcome of its vastness and the lack of communications had put hinderances to the unification of the whole land. The northern part in spite of its mountainous barrier had communication with the continent by the North-West passes, through which streams of foreign immigrants poured into the land from ancient time. After that came hordes of invaders lured by the tales of the fabulous riches of Hindustan, one after another, exercising a great influence in shaping the political, social and religious life of the people. Owing to this, the north played an important part in determining the history of India. The peninsular India, being isolated from the rest of the north, by the natural barriers of the Narbada, the Vindhya and the Satpura ranges, was little affected by foreign invasions and influence.

The most interesting characteristic of Indian history is its variety. It has different physical features with all types of climate and temperature and from the ethnological point of view, it has variety of racial elements, with different degree of social developments. Almost all the time it has suffered from absence of political union owing to its physical divisions and racial distinctions, developing different customs and manners. Despite this diversity, India has always exhibited 'the great example of the doctrine of one in many'. It depended mostly on its culture which developed a civilization quite different from any other land. This cultural unity that had bound up the different races inhabiting India, developed an Indian culture

giving predominance to mind over matter, which withstood all the onslaughts of foreign intrusion of ideas into the land. The great truths propounded by the ancient sages of the land, inspired the people to follow a spiritual path, to find the meaning of life and for the pursuit of ultimate salvation.

Very little has been unearthed about the ancient history of India. Want of reliable chronology accounts for the confusion and vagueness of the history of ancient time. But the patient labours of different scholars have to a certain extent solved the *puzzles* of Indian history, radically changing many past conceptions. The recent excavations at *Mohenjo-daro* in Sind and *Harappa* in Punjab unearthed revolutionary materials to prove that in pre-historic time, the people of Indus Valley had a high order of civilization. These findings refer to the culture of an age which is called *Chalcolithic Age*, when utensils and weapons were made of stones and copper. There has been found no trace of iron in that age.

These discoveries have pushed back the Indian history much farther than it had been supposed previously. It indicates that at least five thousand years back, the Indus Valley had a glorious civilization, not found in any other part of the civilized world. It has been found that people lived there in well-built brick houses with good floors, bathrooms, wells and rubbish pits. The city had developed drainage system and its roads and streets were straight and wide. In a word, it can be said that the municipal life was much advanced and sanitation systems were thoroughly organised. A great Public Bath 180 feet by 108 feet, with a large swimming pool, surrounded by galleries was a spectacular find of the whole excavations.

The people were well advanced in agriculture, tended sheep and cattle and used wheeled vehicles for transport. Cotton cloth was in use which they spun and weaved and their craftsmanship was of high level. The discovery of pictographic script tells that they had an advanced art of writing. In matters of religion, they were worshippers of tree, phallic stones and the mother Goddess and also of a male God.

It has been said that the Sind-Punjab civilization is not of Aryan origin. Many historians are of the opinion that this civilization had a close affinity with the Sumerian civilization of Mesopotamia. Some seals of Indus Valley found in Mesopotamia, establish beyond doubt that intercourse must have existed between Indus Valley and other lands of Western Asia, long before the recorded history of the world. It has also been further said that this great



civilization owed little to outside and there is no ground to believe that it was formed by outside immigrants. The cities of *Harappa* and *Mohenjo-daro* were built by people who had been living in the Indus Valley for several centuries before the Aryans entered India. So the extinction of the Indus Valley civilization made it very difficult for historians to study the real history of the progress and decline of this great civilization. Different scholars have propounded different theories throwing much interesting light on the matter. Some Indian scholars have tried to prove that the people of the Indus Valley were no other than the Aryans who left their original home being forced by circumstances and roamed as nomads in the Central plains of Asia and ultimately re-entered their homeland after many centuries. Most of the Western scholars do not subscribe to this view, opining that the Indus Valley civilization is also an outflow of the Dravadians who were the early settlers of Peninsular India.

Sir Mortimer Wheeler and other historians believe that the Indus Valley was run over by the invading Aryans. The Indo-Aryans are said to have sacked the Indus Valley, giving birth to a new civilization and culture which has sustained itself through many centuries. Another historian Rawlinson supporting this view writes : 'There is evidence that this took place about 1500 B. C. when the Indus Civilization was on the wane'.

This view of Western scholars giving status of immigrants to the Aryans, who came from outside and settled in India after annihilating the natives has been contested by many eminent Indian scholars like Ganganath Jha, D. S. Trivedi, L. D. Kalla and others, who have assigned Punjab or Kashmir as the source of the Aryan flow. Pargitar says that Indian tradition knows no Aryan invasion from outside. Moreover, the sacred books of the Aryans speak of them as the natives of India.

Another Indian scholar, Dr. A. D. Pusalkar writes : 'It would not be correct to ascribe the authorship of the Indus Valley culture to the Aryans or any other particular race. It represents the synthesis of the Aryan and non-Aryan culture. The utmost that we can say is that the *Rig Vedic* Aryans probably formed an important part of the populace in those days, and contributed their share to the evolution of Indus Valley civilization.'

K. N. Dikshit writing about the Pre-historic civilization of the Indus Valley says : 'The material at our disposal is sufficiently large, but in spite of the exhaustive study devoted to the subject by different



scholars, no real light can be thrown on the subject for the benefit of the ordinary student.'

Thus many attempts have been made by many scholars to represent a reasonable explanation of this ancient civilization but any line of reasoning which may appeal to one set of scholars, does not commend itself to others, owing to the incomplete knowledge of the subject. But the fact is that the Indus Valley civilization shown by the excavations of *Harappa* and *Mohenjo-daro* gives evidence of presence in India of a highly developed culture which left its influence rooted in the Indian soil.

However, Rawlinson summarises in the following words : 'What caused the downfall of the Indus Valley culture ? A variety of explanations have been offered—desiccation, an alteration in the bed of the Indus, epidemic disease, or invasion. We infer from the evidence that the inhabitants were a peaceful folk, whose great wealth must have offered a tempting prey to the wild tribes from the hills, and there are reasons for thinking that *Mohenjo-daro* was sacked and the inhabitants put to the sword.'

However, it has been proved beyond any dispute that the Aryans and the Dravadians who lived in India, had developed two distinct and separate cultures and faiths and it is difficult to connect the two. In the early stages of history they were fighting and quarreling with each other for their existence and superemacy and ultimately in many places they merged together forming a cultural synthesis of the two civilizations. About the origin of the Dravadians Prof. Rapson opined that the Dravadians were immigrants who came to India through the North-Western passes. In support of this view, he cited the similarity of the *Brahui* language spoken in certain parts of Baluchistan, with the Dravidian languages of the South. This may prove the existence of the Dravidian people in some parts of Baluchistan before they settled into Southern India. Other scholars have disputed this view advocating that *Brahui* was the outcome of the Dravidian outflow from India into Baluchistan. In any case, it is the most predominant belief that the Dravadians lived in India long before the coming of the Aryans. It is said that the social system of the Dravadians differed from the Aryans in many respects. The Dravadians had a matriarchal society instead of patriarchal which was the Aryan tradition. Their laws of inheritance and marriage system also differed greatly from each other. In the old Dravidian society there had been no traces of caste system which became one of the main features of the Indo-Aryan social

development. In course of time the Dravadians influenced the Aryan civilization and religion, thus playing a great part in transforming many aspects of Brahminism into a more popular one.

The chronological puzzles of the history of ancient India have also confused the minds of scholars in regard to the age of the *Rig Vedic* period. In our present state of knowledge we are not certain if the *Rig Vedic* period had been earlier than the Indus Valley Civilization.

A good number of Indian writers have advocated that the *Rig Vedic* period was prior to the Indus Valley civilization. It was on the banks of the Saraswati in the district of Ambala, in the Punjab, the *Vedic* hymns were composed from where sprang the fountain of the Aryan culture which swept over not only the whole of India but went further beyond its boundaries.

However, whatever may be the earliest history of the origin of the Aryan people, in course of time, they spreaded over the whole of Northern India and named it *Aryavarta*. Their settlement took a long process because the old inhabitants of the land offered them a sturdy resistance. In course of time, they were intermingled with the conquered people and accepted many social and religious beliefs of them. The pastoral Aryans who were lovers of nature adopted the rituals and *Karma* philosophy of the native people. Thus a synthesis of a new mixed culture developed, which later came to be known as Hinduism incorporating all the faiths of the two peoples, and constituting the basis of the intellectual civilization of the Indo-Aryans. About this intermingling of the two races, Hunter, very aptly expressed. 'The nobler stock set free from the severer struggle for life by the bounty of the Indian soil created a language, a literature and a religion of rare stateliness and beauty.'

The *Vedas* were the oldest literature of the Indo-Aryans, composed by the *Rishis* or holy men, coming down from generation to generation. They were not the product of individual persons but considered as the revealed word of God, and the composition extended over a long period. Of the four *Vedas*, the *Rig Veda* is considered to be the earliest and the *Atharva Veda*, the latest one. Each *Veda* is divided into three sections :—(1) the *Samhitas*, (2) the *Brahmanas* (3) the *Upanishads*. The *Samhitas* contain hymns and prayers, while the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* are prose compositions. The *Rig Veda* was a great source of giving birth to art, literature, philosophy and other sciences. It is one of the greatest literatures of mankind. Mostly its hymns are in praise of various gods and goddesses, who



are the allegorical representations of the supreme *Deity*. It says that God is the source of the existence of the *Universe*. All is emanated from the Supreme Being and all will be dissolved unto Him.

The *Brahmanas* deal with theology and rituals and the *Upanishads* are philosophical treatises, representing the synthesis of *Atman* and *Brahman*. A group of persons revolted against the costly rituals prescribed by the *Brahmanas* and developed certain mystical treatises in the name of *Aranyakas*, to be studied in solitude. It was an intellectual revolt against the priestly class and the tenets of *Brahmanas*, describing them as illusive and untrue. They were called heretics or *Nastiks* who moved from place to place enlightening people to rebel against the Brahminical regime and challenging the divine character of the *Vedas*. This struggle ultimately led to the growth of the philosophy of the Charvaka and numerous other religious faiths like those of Jainism and Buddhism, bringing complete disintegration of the early Aryan culture and religions and their rituals lost much of its sanctity. The hold of the *Brahmanas* on the thought and spirit of India not only received a set back but weakened considerably. The result was the growth of *Vedangas* or what was called the limbs of the *Vedas*, that attracted the imagination of the scholars of the day.

After that came the great Epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* adding fresh jewels to the literary crown of ancient India. The *Ramayana* was a unitary work describing the story of the Aryan king Rama, who had been shown carrying the Aryan message to the South, the land occupied by the Dravadians, and ultimately to Lanka, the furthest southern point of India. The other Epic, the *Mahabharata* contained legends in verses and some of which were considered as old as the hymns of the *Vedas*. It is a saga of fratricidal war for the kingdom and the supremacy of the land. Many stories connect the main one, depicting the struggles between the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas*, the two wings of the descendent of the king Bharat. The Bhagwad Gita, carrying the essence of all *Upanishadic* philosophy occupies a unique position in this Epic, which the Hindus of the coming generations accepted as their *Gospel*. The Epics brought tremendous influence upon the lives of the people of India in the subsequent periods of history. Recognising its importance in the lives of the people, Hamid Raza writes : 'To know the Indian Epics is to understand the Indian people better; for they represent us with the most graphic and lifelike picture that exists of the civilization and culture, the political and social life, the religion and thought of ancient India.'

There developed another kind of literature called the *Puranas*, dealing with subjects, namely creations, genealogies of gods, reigns of Manu and history of various dynasties. Buhler characterised them as 'popular sectarian compilations of mythology, philosophy, history and the sacred law.' About the *Puranic* genealogies, V. Smith says that they are 'records of high importance and extremely helpful in the laborious task of reconstructing the early political history of India.' The *Puranas* are mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* and in the *Brahmanas* but they seem to have been given the present shape during revival of Sanskrit in the Gupta period.

In the sixth century B.C. there occurred a great religious unrest in India. The early *Vedic* practices of worship degenerated into a mechanical system of rituals and sacrifices in the hands of the priestly class, the Brahmins, who practically established a monopoly over matters of religion. Their arrogant class pride created a feeling of jealousy in the minds of the warrior class, the *Kshatriyas*, who were relegated to an inferior position by the Brahmin class. Against the superstitions and orthodox practices of the Brahmins, which brought many corruptions in the field of religion. People's unrest led to the growth of two great reform movements led by Mahavir and Gautama, both of them being scions of the *Kshatriya* families. It was the intellectual decay begetting ethical scepticism and moral anarchy that paved the way for the growth of *Jainism* and *Budhism*. According to Will Durant, *Jainism* and *Budhism*, though impregnated with the melancholy atheism of a disillusioned age, were religious reactions against the hedonistic creeds of an 'emancipated' and worldly leisure class. Both the new religions greatly affected the Brahmanic philosophy, literature and many other aspects but Brahminism could not be displaced from the soil of India.'

The religion of *Jainism* found in Bardhamana Mahavira, the last of the twenty-four *Thirthankars*, a great champion, who gave a final shape to the philosophical thoughts of his predecessors. The three main principles of Jainism, right faith, right knowledge and right action came from Mahavira's teachings for the attainment of salvation by freeing the soul from its earthly bondage. In course of time Jainism was divided into two sects, known as the *Svetambaras* and the *Digambaras*. Both the sects advocated an austere religion based on *ahimsa* and asceticism.

Gautama, the founder of *Budhism*, was for some years the contemporary of Mahavira. Even in his youth, pleasures of life did not



attract him and he dedicated himself to discover a remedy for the misery, suffering and ills of mankind. He advocated a Middle Path, following which one could attain *Nirvana*, a state of mental tranquility through meditation. By that process men will secure release from rebirths, sorrows and sufferings. *Budhism* has been called a system of morality than a religion. Certain virtues, or moral principles, called *Silas*, have been professed to effect cessation of the sufferings. About the rise of Buddhism, K. M. Panikkar says 'With the decay of Vedic religion and the importance attached to direct realisation through spiritual discipline and contemplation, asceticism became the dominant feature of religious life—a system which by its separation of the life of the society from that of the religious leader could only have led to greater spiritual bankruptcy.' *Buddha's* Four Noble Truths, through the observance of which *Moksha* could be achieved, got the patronage and support from the Magadhan rulers and in course of time *Buddhism* became a very popular religion admitting many converts rich and poor into its fold.

About that time, a part of North-Western India was occupied by *Darius I*, the king of Persia, who is said to have annexed Indus Valley as far as the deserts of Rajputana. His son *Xerexes*, partially maintained some of the Indian possession which grew weaker day by day and it completely disappeared in the fourth century. B. C. It is said that under his rule Indian troops formed a part of his army which fought against the Greeks. During those days Persian influence was very great in the Punjab and Sind which left its mark in literature and art of the country.

In the year 326 B. C. Alexander of Macedon invaded India and that episode has been described as the sheet anchor of the Indian chronology. At that time, India was split up into a number of states and there was want of political unity in the country which failed to offer a united resistance to the invader's army. But in the north-east of India Magadha was an imperial state, rich and powerful and maintained a strong army. It has been pointed out by historians that the stubborn resistance Alexander met at the hands of king Poros of Jhelum and Chenab area of the Punjab and the story of the mighty power of the Nanda kings which might had reached his ears, caused the retreat of Alexander without proceeding further east to conquer whole of India.

The direct result of Alexander's invasion was very little but indirectly it influenced many institutions of the country particularly in

the field of art and religion. This contact of the East and the West developed in course of time, one of the most cosmopolitan schools of art, in Gandhara of *Hellenistic* tradition. Europe also learnt something from India as a result of this conjunction. The *Gnostic* form of Christianity is said to have been influenced by *Buddhism* and European philosophy was coloured by Indian influence.

The immediate result of the invasion of India by Alexander in political field was the unification of almost of all the Northern Indian states under Chandra Gupta Maurya, who swept away the last vestiges of the Macedonian occupation of the Indian soil. The Maurya dynasty marked one of the most glorious periods of Indian history, unifying India under a line of able monarchs, with a system of administration, which earned the admiration of the world. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, who was a minister in the court of Chandra Gupta was almost Machiavellian in spirit and thought, on the art of government and considered even to day as an unsurpassed treatise on political literature. The scion of this dynasty was the Great Asoka who occupies an important place not only in the history of India but of the whole world civilization. It has been said that Asoka combined in himself the zeal of a monk and the wisdom of a king. His *Dharma Vijaya* campaigns substituting military conquests, turned state officials into religious preachers, advocating peace and non-violence in the realm. This policy subsequently exposed the country to foreign invasion and as a result led to the disintegration of the Maurya kingdom in the hands of Asoka's descendents who proved to be weak and incompetent successors.

The next dynasty to rule over Magadha was the Sunga dynasty, founded by Pushyamitra, a general of the last imperial Mauryas, who is reported to have usurped the throne by slaying his master. During the reign of this dynasty the *Yavanas* (Greeks) made attempts to invade India which was repulsed by Vasumitra, a great warrior of the day. This period was very important in the history of India. The advancing Greeks were held back away from the borders of India and were forced to make good relations with the Indian kings. The period also revived Brahminism and the philosophy of *Bhagwad Gita* made extensive followers both in India and in neighbouring foreign lands.

Another important dynasty which played a great role in the history of India was that of the Kushans and Kanishka was their great king both in war and peace. He was a great conqueror whose



kingdom extended from Gandhara to Benares. His fame rests not merely as a great warrior but he was a great patron of *Buddhism*. His contribution to the field of propagating *Buddhism* lies next to Asoke. Like him, he also called the last *Buddhist* Council to settle disputed questions of Buddhist faith. He was a great patron of art and literature. His court was adorned by many great luminaries like Vasumitra, Nagarjuna, Asvaghosha, Parsva and Charak. During the rule of this dynasty *Hellenistic* influence gave birth to the Gandhara school of art in India which left an important mark in the whole history of Indian art and sculpture in general. Besides this school, many other centres of sculpture produced good works of quality in Sarnath, Mathura and Amaravati during the rule of Kanishka and his descendents.

The beginning of the fourth century A.D. saw the rise of the Gupta dynasty and with it India entered upon a new epoch. It was a period of good government and of a prolific intellectual activity in the field of art, literature and science. The chief feature of this period was the revival of Brahminism which was tolerant of *Buddhism* and *Jainism*. This has been testified by the great Chinese traveller *Fa-hein*. There was a great upsurge in every field of activities. Vincent A. Smith, compares this period with that of the Elizabethan period of England. He says, 'In India all the lesser lights are outshone by the brilliancy of Kalidasa, as in England all the smaller authors are overshadowed by Shakespeare. But as the Elizabethan literature would still be rich if Shakespeare had not written, so in India, if Kalidasa's works had not survived, enough of other men's writings would remain, to distinguish the age as extraordinarily fertile in literary achievement.'

The Golden Age of Gupta rulers was brought to an end by the Huns and Gurjars, two powerful nomad tribes spreading devastation in the country in the fourth century A.D. This period has been called as 'a turning point in the history of northern and western India both politically and socially'. Many small states arose resulting in much confusion and anarchy and in the midst of that a very powerful figure appeared on the stage imposing his authority over the whole country. India emerged once again as a great power enjoying good and orderly government. It was Harshavardhana, the last of the Hindu kings of India, became the paramount ruler of the whole of Northern India. He was a pious and able king under whose rule both *Buddhism* and Brahminism flourished. Hiuen Tsang, a pious Chinese pilgrim, visiting India during Harsha's

rule, left his experiences recorded in a book throwing much light on the condition of India during those days. Harsha's death in 648 A.D. was followed by two centuries of darkness, confusion and disunity in India. Writing about the condition of India after the death of Harsha, Will Durant writes : 'All the glory of Harsha's rule, however, was artificial and precarious, for it depended upon the ability and generosity of a mortal king. When he died an usurper seized the throne and illustrated the nether side of monarchy. Chaos ensued and continued almost a thousand years.'

During the ninth century, India witnessed numerous independent states warring amongst themselves. There existed no central power strong enough to repel the attacks of the Muslim invaders who began to loot and plunder the riches of India. The country suffered from political fragmentation and social regression. In the field of religion Buddhism had no vital force which could withstand the Muslim attack and as a result India fell an easy prey to the invaders.

The first attack on India was made by the Arabs in 664 A.D. but the real attempt to conquer India was made by Mahmud, an Afghan, who has been described in history as a great plunderer of the wealth of India. He destroyed many religious temples, looted their riches and ransacking the land took away tons of gold and jewels every time he invaded India. But it was in the year 1186 A.D. that Muhammad Ghori established Sultanate in India. Dynasties after dynasties of Muslim rulers came to power and ruled over India for hundreds of years making India their homeland and bringing much glory and fame to the people and the country. It was during these days that the story of the fabulous riches of Hindusthan reached to the western mercantile lands, and lured by the tempting wealths the adventurists among them appeared on the coasts of India with their gunboats and captured power from the Muslim ruler of Delhi. Then India entered into a new phase of slavery under a foreign rule for nearly two hundred years.

It has been said that the Dravidian civilization was predominant in India before the coming of the Aryans but very little has been known of the Peninsular India before 600 A.D. Hence northern India remained directly before the eyes of historians who wrote the history of India. It is not a fact that South India always remained in obscurity. The Aryan civilization which was dominating and influencing the courses of Indian history, had its sway in the peninsular India also. The South could not remain unaffected by the advancing Vedic culture.



But its progress was slow because of the opposition it encountered from the native population. The first reference of the Aryan advance in the south is found in the *Epic Ramayana* which narrates the exploits of Rama, the Aryan hero, who defeated Ravana, the king of Lanka. The Aryan dominance over the South came during the rule of the Maurya kings. Chandra Gupta carried the border of his kingdom to the peninsular India. His grandson Asoke had his peace emissaries sent to the south during his reign. Many independent dynasties grew up and ruled the area bringing much glory to the land. The Tamil area had three states the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas, who played important roles in bringing social stability and cultural development throughout many centuries. In Andhra, the Satavahanas, the Chalukyas, Pallavas and Rastrakutas all left remarkable history behind their rule. It should be mentioned that the south played a very important part in the field of religion in India. The cult of Vaishnavism and Saivism found much impetus there and it also played a great role in modifying the orthodox Brahminism of the Vedic kind. The most important contribution of the South in the history of India is the spread of Indian culture and commerce to far away lands developing the maritime activities of the Indian people. It has been said that in commercial enterprise South India had an extensive trade with the West. Moreover, it developed its own indigenous architecture untouched by foreign influence which is called *Sikhara* of terraced pyramidal tower and *Gopurams* with huge gateways to the temple enclosure producing spectacular features of the Dravidian style.

### B. Social Structure

Like other places, India was inhabited by palaeolithic men of old *Stone Age*, followed by neolithic men of the new *Stone Age*. The neolithic men were far more civilized than their forerunners. They tilled land, possessed domestic animals, used pottery and buried their dead. Then came the *Chalcolithic Age*, when copper and bronze were used side by side with those of stone implements. The Indus Valley civilization has been identified with this age. After the extinction of this civilization, Indian history became predominantly an admixture of the Dravidian and Aryan culture. It is said that the Aryans subdued the Dravidians politically and socially and called them '*Dasyus*' who offered a sturdy resistance to their progress. In course of time, the Aryans made peaceful penetration to the Dravidian land and conquered them spiritually and thus building up the Vedic civilization which was the crowning achievement of the early inhabitants of India.

C. E. M. Joad gives a brief summery of the different races and

their main characteristics which have contributed to the making of India.

1. **The Indo-Aryans.** The Indo-Aryan stock is found chiefly in the Punjab, in Kashmir and in Rajasthan. They are a tall, slight and loose-limbed people with a long prominent nose, having light brown complexion.
2. **The Dravadians.** The Dravidian stock is found mainly in the southern part of India. They are a short dark man with long black hair, a broad and wide nose with flat nostrils.
3. **The Mongolians.** The Mongolians are found among the tribal people inhabiting the boarder lands between India and Tibet, Assam and Burma. They are small men with broad heads, narrow slanting eyes, dark or yellow complexion and having flat faces.

Summing up, Joad further says : 'The mixture of races has widened the outlook of Indians, made them receptive of new impressions and accustomed them to the impact of new ideas. As a result, they are cosmopolitan in outlook, tolerant in behaviour and open-minded in thought.'

The Aryans by their cosmopolitan outlook and open-mindedness could assimilate all the good virtues of others and thus gave a cultural unity to all who came to India. The fundamental principles which the founders of the early civilization maintained was the unity of India in spite of many differences that were found in the land. Prof. Humayun Kabir in his book 'Indian Heritage' writes : 'The invaders who had poured into India after the Aryan incursions were till the Arabs appeared on the scene, without any developed culture of their own and were swallowed up by the Indian stream.'

There is a great differences of opinion among historians about the origin of the caste system in India. According to some, this system could be traced to the distinction between the fair-skinned Aryan and the dark-skinned Dravidian population of the land. In the long struggle that followed between these two peoples, the Aryans became victorious and the native Dravadians were vanquished. From the Sanskrit word *Varna* which means caste, this broad division was subsequently made; the vanquished people becoming serfs or slaves and the victorious people were called *Dvija* or twice born. But other historians have opined that the fourfold divisions of the Indian population were made according to the occupation of the people.



(1) The learned or priestly class was the Brahmin. (2) The fighting and ruling class was the Kshatriyas. (3) The commercial and trading people were called Vaisyas and while, (4) the common people were to serve their superiors. Hence, the subdued race was reduced to the position of slaves to be always at the service of their masters. 'Never shall an Aryan be subjected to slavery' was the fundamental and guiding principle of the charter of the Aryan race. The Brahmins were considered to be superior to other classes owing to their leading pure and saintly lives. Their intellectual and moral superiority came as a result of considerable self restraint and self denial which dated from the *Rig Vedic* times. The standard of dharma which the Brahmins followed was a separate one from that of those who were considered inferior in the society. The ascendancy of this class had been due to the concern of the Aryans for their personal salvation and this could be secured only through religious rites which the Brahmins had the privilege of performing for all classes of people. No other class had the authority of enchanting or even handling the *Vedas*. Thus, in the Aryan society the Brahmins were the head of the Aryas the Kshatriyas, the warrior class were the rulers of the land. The Vaisyas, the mercantile community, had also an honourable position in the social hierarchy. The Sudras, the common people were the Dasas, who were beyond the pale of the Aryan society, having been denied of the study of sacred scriptures. It has been said that the Brahmin represented the Creator's mouth, the Kshatriya the arm, the Vaisya the thigh, while the Dasa was the feet. Each of these four castes contributed its share within its own limitation, to the larger life of the whole community.

B.N. Lunia describes the caste system of the Aryan society in the following words : 'The caste system enabled Hinduism to expand its ranks, led to the preservation of skilled labour and acted as the stabilising force and preserved the Hindu culture. On the other hand, it has broken the solidarity of the Hindu society, suppressed the liberty of the individuals, become the instrument of oppression and in fostering disruptive social and political forces. It has been a milestone round the neck of the Hindus and dragging them with a rapid speed towards political and social decline.'

The Brahmin class predominated throughout the Vedic period until the Kshatriyas got equal rights when *Upanishads* began to preach higher knowledge for all classes of people. The great Epics, in course of time, brought the sacred knowledge within reach of all,

including the Sudras, thus the stronghold of the Brahminic hierarchy began to dwindle. About this development Elphinstone writes : 'The Brahmin discipline has gradually declined. Their rules have been neglected in cases where the temptation was strong, or the risk of loss of influence not apparent, until the diminished sanctity of their character has weakened their power, and has thrown a considerable portion of it into the hands of men of other classes, who form the great body of the monastic order.'

The basic idea of caste system was not for the disintegration of society but to bring about a greater efficiency based on the principle of division of labour. According to C.E.M. Joad : 'At its best the system may be reckoned as one of the most successful attempts to maintain harmony between different races and creeds living together in geographical propinquity that the world has seen.'

Prof. Kabir writes : 'The strength and the weakness of Indian culture in its social aspects can be best studied in the institution of caste. The criticisms against caste are obvious. It has broken up the unity of Indian life. It has prevented the growth of democracy. Among the higher castes, it has engendered snobbishness and pride. Among the lower castes, it has induced a spirit of inferiority and servility. Among all sections of the people, it has hindered the development of a common humanity. In spite of these and other valid criticisms against caste, it must nevertheless be conceded that the institution owed its origin to a spirit of toleration and accommodation.'

Sir William Wilson Hunter describing the caste system writes : 'The three castes are of Aryan descent and were honoured by the name of Twice-born Castes. They could all be present at the sacrifices and they worshipped the same bright gods. The Sudras were the slave bands of black descent.....They could never rise out of their servile condition; and to them was assigned the severest tool in the fields, and all the hard and dirty work of the village community.'

Commenting on the merits of this system Beni Prasad says : 'The theory of caste distributes the power, prestige, privileges and goods of this world according to functions. The idea of duty which lies behind the functional concept implies that the individual does not live for himself. He exists for a greater whole to which his own ambitions must be subordinated. Thus organised society becomes something more than the individuals who compose it.'

In spite of many drawbacks of the caste system, it had its



merits also. This institution had obtained recognition in the country for many centuries holding against many onslaughts. In a word, it contributed to the stability of the Hindu society. In the words of Monier Williams, 'Caste has been useful in promoting self sacrifice, in securing subordination of the individual to an organised body, in restraining vice and in preventing pauperism.' But later on, the system produced within itself inherent contradictions when its utility was felt no more. The tyranny of the Brahminical class forced the other classes to rebel against the superiority of the Brahmins. The effects of it were seen in the mighty reform movements of *Budhism* and *Jainism* which swept over the land for centuries, breaking, down the caste barriers and clearing the atmosphere of superstition created by the priestly class.

### C. The Institution of Ashrams.

As the Aryan society was divided into four castes, so an Aryan individual had to pass through four stages of life, viz, that of a *Brahmachari*, a *Grahashti*, a *Vanaprasthi* and lastly, a *Sanyasin*. As a *Brahmachari*, on the investiture of sacred thread in his adolescence, a boy had to go to his master's house for his education. There he had to lead a life of stern celibacy and of self denial. After the completion of his education, he became a *Grahashti* entering into a family life by marrying a woman and producing children. The third stage of *Vanaprasthi* was the life of an ascetic when by meditation and penance, he freed his soul from material things and at last in his old age he had to leave his hermitage and turned to be a homeless wanderer breaking away from all earthly ties. Away from the materialistic world, the Sanyasi led a life of probing into the mysteries of human existence and for the salvation of his soul. A.L. Basham writing in his book 'The Wonder that was India' says : 'This scheme, of course, represents the ideal rather than the real. Many young men never passed through the first stage of life in the form laid down, while only a few went beyond the second. Many of the hermits and ascetics of ancient India were evidently not old men, and had either shortened or omitted the stage of householder. The series of the four stages is evidently an idealisation of the facts, and an artificial attempt to find room for the conflicting claims of family life and asceticism in a single life time.'

In fact, the institution of *Ashram* life was an ideal one and was introduced by the Brahminical class with great rigidity to maintain their integrity and supremacy against the new growing ideas of

*Budhism and Jainism.* In addition to that, the sages prescribed these four stages of life in order to fulfil the necessary social and family obligations. It was also undertaken to achieve the spiritual end in salvation of one's own soul. About this institution B.G. Gokhale says : 'The ashrams are, therefore, so designed as to ensure social well-being. The two traditions which they subserve are those of Dharma,—social preservation and growth, and Yajnya the moulding of the human personality in such a manner as to eliminate friction and aid individual development through the spirit of sacrifice.'

#### D. The Position of Women in Society

In the *Vedic* and *Epic* society women were held in high esteem. The married woman was mistress of the house; she ruled over the slaves and other female members of the family and shared in the sacrifices and performances of religious rites. The wife is described as 'half the man, his truest friend, a perpetual spring of virtue, pleasure and wealth'. She shadowed her husband by her virtue of grace, piety, excellence, benignity, love, devotion and sacrifice. She was the *Prakriti* and the man, the *Purusha*. The woman, before her marriage had opportunity to study under a teacher. In the early *Vedic* age boys and girls had equal rights to education. Like boys, girls also were initiated into *Gayatri* and *Brahmacharya* by the *Guru*. After her period of *Brahmacharya* she was married to a *Brahmachari*, a young man entering into the life of a *Grahasthi*.

P. L. Bhargava writing about the position of Hindu women in his book 'India in the Vedic Age' says : 'The position of women in the Aryan society of the Vedic Age was fairly high. Girls were educated like boys. The *Atharvaveda* distinctly says that a girl who has passed the period of *Brahmacharya* (Vedic Study) deserves to be married to a youngman. Women of education and attainment were held in as great esteem as men of the same category, and the poems of many ladies have been honoured by their inclusion in the canonical literature. There was no seclusion of women and they had considerable freedom of choosing their partners in life. The position of wife was an honoured one in the family. The wedding hymn blesses the new bride to be treated like a queen by her father-in-law, mother-in-law, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law. The wife and husband were considered the joint owners of the household. A man could not perform a sacrifice or any other religious rite without the company of his wife or *Patni*, the very word in Sanskrit is regarded by Panini as implying the right of one who bears it to participate in a sacrifice performed by her husband.'



In the *Smriti-Purana* period, the status of women in society fell down. Around the beginning of the Christian era, Vedic knowledge was closed to them. As a girl, she was under the guardianship of her parents, as an adult, of her husband, and as a widow, of her sons. Early and compulsory marriage of girls became a practice and custom of society. The *Upanayan* for them became a formality losing its ancient virtues. The withdrawal of study of the *Vedas* put them into the fold of faiths, stressing on *Bhakti* by way of devotion to the social institutions and its rules, prescribed by the law givers. The womenfolk practically lost their former independence.

Although *Buddhism* brought a little improvement to the women's status, yet the nuns were always below the ranks of the ordinary monks. The two wings of *Jainism* were divided regarding the position of women in the society. The *Digambaras* looked down upon women being unable to attain *Moksha*, while the *Svetambaras* did not agree to this view. It has been said that there were as many as thirty six thousands nuns in the days of Mahavira.

In ancient Vedic India, young girls were free to choose their own husbands. Many women did not marry and remained with their parents till death as maidens. While monogamy was the rule, polygamy was also prevalent even in the time of the *Rig Veda*. In this connection there is an interesting story narrated in the Great Epic *Mahabharata*. The wife of sage Udalaka, while she was sitting by the side of her husband and son, a Brahmin with the help of some associates forcibly took her away and they all violated the modesty of the woman. The young son got enraged and was prevailed upon by his father telling him about the family custom. Another story is of Satyakam who asked about his ancestry by his teacher Gautam for initiation as a *Brahmachari* replied :—‘I do not know of what ancestry I belong. But on enquiry my mother said that in her youth when she was busy with household duties and attending on guests, I came to her womb. Her name is Jabala and I am her son Satyakama’.

The upper classes of people were invariably polygamous, as were many Brahmins and wealthy members of lower status. At times, they even indulged in irresponsible sex relation leading a non-marital life to satisfy sexual appetite. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, ‘Past ages were filled by actual human beings, not abstractions, persons with passions in their hearts, sensitive and tender, who pass through dawning love, blind passion, ardent tenderness, doubt, apprehension, defiance, sorrow, despair, beings who abandon

themselves to passion, and do not scruple to violate moral rules. Even in the *Rig Veda*, we find references to women going astray, faithless wives, elopements, lawless unions. Our Epics are full of stories like that of Visvamitra and Meneka where even great heroes falter and stumble in the narrow path of conventional duty.'

The Aryan society even allowed widow marriages and *Niyoga* to have a dominating share of population to enable them to defeat the native people and carry the banner of Aryan culture to the four corners of India. In a word, women were free in many respects, and their rights were recognised by the society. There were many instances of women participating in the public affairs of the state. No religious ceremony was complete without the participation of wife by the side of her husband. Boys and girls were allowed to mix together and love-marriages were not uncommon in the *Vedic* and later *Vedic* periods. In the period of *Arthashastra*, some restrictions were placed on the movements of women without the permission of their husbands.

Marriage was considered a sacred trust for all and no unmarried women could get salvation even practising severe penance. The consecration by the sacrament of marriage was a religious necessity and it was indissoluble by human action. Eight types of marriages are mentioned in the religious text-books. Of the eight forms, four viz. *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Arsa*, and *Prajapatya* were approved and permissible. The other forms viz. *Paisacha*, *Rakhasa*, *Asura* and *Gandharva* form of marriages were looked down with disfavour. Marriage by *Swayamvara* was very popular during the *Epic* period. It was for the bride to make the selection of her husband from among the gathered valiant youngmen of the day. The woman after the death of her husband could pass her days in widowhood, produce children through *Niyoga* and could remarry if she desired. *Niyoga* meant a custom by which dead man's brother or next of kin had a right to marry the widow. By this custom, women were allowed to bear children even during the life time of their husbands when they were incapable of procreation. Dr. Altekar commenting on *Niyoga* writes in his book, 'The position of Women in Hindu civilization':— 'The woman was everywhere regarded as a species of property, which passed into the husband's family on her marriage. She was married no doubt to a person, but also in his family. So, if her husband died, his brother or any other near relation would take her to wife, or raise children on her. This usually happened when a person died without leaving any male issue behind.....To die without a son



was regarded as a great spiritual calamity and it was the sacred duty of a brother to see that a son was raised on the sister-in-law to perpetuate his brother's memory and to ensure him a seat in heaven. If this was not done, there was also the danger of the widow marrying a stranger and being lost to the family.'

Further he writes : 'It was further regarded as most important that the son by *Niyoga* should resemble the real son as much as possible. He would have the maximum amount of the blood of the family running in his veins, only if the appointment of the widow for *Niyoga* was made with her husband's brother. If the appointment was with a stranger, the son would have only half the blood of the family in his veins.' It has been said that even Kautilya advocated marriage for the widows and permitting women to have temporary unions with others in the absence of husbands for a long period and uncertainty of their whereabouts.

This custom of procreating children by *Niyoga* began to be opposed afterwards when vehement opposition came from Apastamba and Budhayana whose efforts led to placing of restriction on the free use of *Niyoga* as practiced earlier. It was soon stamped out from society as an inconsistent, absurd, unsuitable and barbaric relics of the past. It cannot be denied that this custom of *Niyoga* was manifest in society mainly for three reasons, viz, for the increase of population, to give economic support to the widows and the belief that to die without a son was a great spiritual calamity. But in course of time this custom of remarriages of widows came to an end. The widows had to pass a very strict life of self-denial. She was considered to be a an evil woman and was destined to live outside the sphere of all social merriment and festivities. During this period a great setback came to the status of the women in India. Apastamba called a man sinner if he committed a mistake by marrying a woman who had already fallen into the arms of another man. Chastity became the sole concern of the womenfolk and any deviation from it was taken to be a great sin.

The union by marriage has a sanctity and there is found no provision for annulment of marriage in the ancient law books. Divorce was of course advocated, at times, under very limited circumstances by the *Arthashastra*, in which periods of desertion and waiting by wife were explained in detail. A woman could take a second husband only under the following circumstances, viz, when the husband was dead or missing, he became a mendicant, incapable of producing

children or fell from his caste. Yet divorce was not very popular at that time. Even adultery by women was excused and they were taken back in the family. The injudicious behaviour was always overlooked to avoid bad name of the caste. Divorce has been considered by the ancient people as a great disruptive factor in the peaceful domestic life. Although it was absent from the social life, yet separation was allowed owing to mutual hatred and violation of decency.

The system of *Satidaha* i.e. the immolation of the woman on the funeral pyre of her dead husband, which became a very popular custom in later days among the Hindu women, was completely absent in the Aryan society. It might have been in existence in the Pre-Aryan society where there had been a belief that the requirements of a living man and dead man were the same in both the worlds. No where in the *Vedic* literature, there is any mention of the system of *Satidaha*. Only there is one incident mentioned in one of the Epics that a woman named Madari went to the other world with the dead body of her husband. It has been said that she went to the funeral pyre owing to the social environment prevalent at the time which hindered her to perform certain duties after the demise of her husband.

The custom of *Satidaha* originated among the princely order in the early part of the beginning of the Christian era. It was considered to be the best proof of the affection and attachment of the wife for her dead husband. In later days among the Rajputs it became a prevalent custom for which they felt very proud of their womenfolk who threw themselves into the burning pyre of their dead husband willingly and gracefully. Those who deviated from this practice were considered to be neglecting in their duty and insulting the memory of the dead man. Wheeler writes : 'It is somewhat remarkable that in the ancient Vedic site of cremation there is no authentic appearance of Sati, or the sacrifice of the living wife or concubine in the burning place of the dead man, in order that the female might accompany his spirit to the world of shades'. It is, therefore, clear that the custom of *Satidaha* originated not in Vedic period but at a later stage of the Indian history.

In the history of ancient India there is a reference of a class of girls, called *Devadasis*, who were appointed to serve deities in the temples. They were the singing girls whose duty was to provide instrumental and vocal music at the time of divine services in a temple. This institution developed after third century A.D. when India saw the emergence of a movement of building up a great number of monasteries and temples in the country. The virgin girls were



dedicated to the service of gods and goddesses, who had to lead a life of isolation from the outside world and of all earthly pleasures. But in course of time, the atmosphere inside the temple were vitiated leading to the deterioration of moral of the peoples. The *Devadasi* girls serving the deities of the temples became the object of attraction for the visitors to carry on romantic love intrigues ending in elopements. The *Devadasi* system had the support of princes, aristocrats and interested Brahmins of the land, although gradually there developed a strong opposition against it, characterising the system as unhealthy and immoral.

The profession of singing and dancing by girls was an old one, and this led to the growth of the courtesan class who were privileged to attend all the social and religious functions of the day. Ambapali, the courtesan in Vaisali was a highly honoured woman in the land. Even the *Buddha* graced her with a visit to her home. The institution of courtesan developed as a result of the introduction of early marriage of girls, who remained unaccomplished in the art of pleasing their husbands. The desire of men to have a better taste of life led them to fall upon other sources, thus creating the class of dancing girls or prostitutes in the society. Kautilya has dealt extensively about the rules, regulations and other machinery set up by the state, to look after this special class of women. They were required to deposit two days' earning in the public exchequer from their monthly income.

#### E. The Government and the people

Ancient India has witnessed both the forms of governments, kingship as well as republican. In the seventh century B.C. India made much progress in foreign trade and commerce, although civilized settlements existed only in the plains of the Indus and the Ganges. Very little is known about the political condition of India prior to that period. During that time there existed in India sixteen big states called *Mahajanapadas*, mentioned in the *Buddhist* literature, extending from Gandhara in the Punjab to Anga along the lower course of the Ganges. Only one state Asmak on the bank of the Godavari in the South is mentioned in that list. It is said that most of these states were monarchies but two republics are mentioned there to have existed at that time, viz, the Vajji confederation of Vaisali and the Mallas of Kushinara and Pava.

It is also to be mentioned that republican form of government flourished in India from a very ancient time. The term *Gana* or

*Sangha*, meaning for a republic is mentioned in the *Vedic* literature and the *Epics*. *Ganas* are also mentioned in the *Arthashastra* and the Greek writers also testified to the existence of many republican tribes who had put up great resistance to the invading army of Alexander.

The sources of Indian political thought were the *Brahmanas* and other *Buddhist* scriptures in Pali language. The complete and comprehensive book on the statecraft was the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya which dealt with the control of the state, the organisation of national economy and about the conduct of war and peace. Prior to this, the *Epics* bore many testimonies about the administration of a country and particularly about the relations between the ruler and the ruled. The *Smriti* literature, specially that of Manu was a comprehensive treatise on political theory. The ideas on Government and political life of the people were dealt very exhaustively by Kamandak in his *Nitisar* and Somadeva in his *Nitivakyamrta*.

From early days India had the privilege of having elected assemblies and elected monarchs for running the administration and looking after the welfare of the people. These institutions were based on democratic principles. The elected assembly was often called the *Samiti* which was composed of the representatives of the villages. The *Samiti* had the power to elect a king who was to preside over the meeting of the *Samiti*. He was a leader of the community but could not act against the decision of the *Samiti*. The exigencies of war which were common features of those early days, made the post of a king more indispensable for the society. In course of time the institution of kingship turned to be divine in character and a king was considered to be the highest among men. This divine theory has been very exhaustively dealt in the *Manusmriti*. The king who performed the *Aswamedha Yagna* became a celebrated one earning a national, as well as, universal prestige. The Maurya kings who were converted to Buddhism made no practice of this ritual but the Sunga dynasty who prospered and ruled after the decline of the Mauryas revived this practice again.

The *Sabha* was another political institution of the ancient Aryans. It was a body of persons with reputation for wisdom and statesmanship, who acted as a body of counsellors to advise the king in war and peace. Both the *Samiti* and the *Sabha* acted as organs in controlling the arbitrary and despotic rule of the head of the state. During those days, even in kingship, the people had a voice, real enough to banish a despot and recall a benevolent king. Side by



side with the great kingdoms there existed many republics ruled by aristocratic elements of the area. The Greek writers described these republics as autonomous states with sound administration and high order of economy. The Mauryan rulers were found to be tolerant to these republics which continued to prosper till the rise of the Gupta power in India. These republics were under oligarchical rule where emphasis was laid more on the good of the individual than the good of the community at large. Franchise was restricted to the aristocrats only and the general people had no voice in the running of the country's administration. The early Gupta rulers had to give recognition to the republics of Lichavis for their great power and strength. These republics decayed ultimately after the 5th, century A.D. when the Gupta empire left none of it to exist on the map of India.

Generally the administration of the country was carried by the king with his divine power having no human control over him. He was the fountain of justice and a protector of the country against any foreign invasion. The maintenance of peace and order among his subjects were his paramount duty. He ought to be an ideal man with no inclination to pleasure and frivolities of life and who was not a slave of his passion and desires. With the help of a council of ministers the king ran the day to day administration for the welfare of the state. Among his subjects the Brahmins had a privileged position whose counsels in matters of state affairs he respected most. Writing about the system of administration Elphinstone writes : 'The army is to be immediately regulated by a Commander-in-chief, the actual infliction of punishment by the officers of the justice; the treasury and the country by the king himself; peace and wars by the ambassador. The king was doubtless to superintend all the departments, but when tired of over-looking over the affairs of men, he might allow that duty to devolve on a well-qualified prime minister.' The king was in fact the centre and round him every one right from the Chaplain of the court to the lowest servants lived. The court of the king greatly reflected all aspects of spiritual and material life of the people.

The Gupta power had built up a great unified empire in India. During those days the central government became the most powerful organ throughout the whole of Gupta territories, which was divided into a large number of kingdoms and republican states. The Gupta administration was famous for its benign principles where people were not forced to labour under compulsion. The land of the Crown was divided

into specific parts to meet the expenses of the different class of people who served the administration and for those who lived upon the charity of the state. It is said that during the Gupta rule people lived in prosperity with little burden of taxes and their standard of living was high.

Baij Nath Puri, describing the economic condition of ancient India writes : 'Economic activity was confined not to agriculture alone, or industry, or livestock, or some other business, but it included all possible trades and occupations, which emboldens us to assert that it was highly developed and organised economic life. The people were content neither with what they produced through direct effort, nor were they self-sufficing, but for the satisfaction of want they had to depend on others' efforts also. This was done through the agency of exchange by money and also by barter. Though, as Megasthenes pointed out, there was no possibility of mobility of labour, but according to Hindu law text, it was both vertical and horizontal. A person could change his occupation if it did not suit him. Thus we can easily presume that Indians manifested a well developed and organised economic life based on high economic principles.'

The system of espionage was another feature introduced in the administration of the country by the Maurya rulers. It was Chandra Gupta Maurya who usurped the throne from the hand of the last of the Nandas, introduced this system with vigour and efficiency under the guidance of Kautilya, the most craftly and intelligent minister of all ancient India ever produced. Under this espionage system informers and reporters evolved out methods of communication in languages, symbols and signs of their own unknown to others. These persons were drawn from both the sexes and were spread over amongst all classes of society. Through this agency, the king remained well informed about the activities of his servants and subjects, thus lessening the chances of revolt and conspiracy against him. Some of the informers were specifically appointed to look after the personal safety of the king. Vincent Smith writes that the government relied on a highly organised system of espionage, pervading every department of the administration and every class of the population. The formal rules concerning spies occupy a prominent place in the treatise, every chapter of which assumes that the working of the machinery of the government depends mainly on the successful utilization of secret information.'



### F. Defence and Foreign relations

The Aryans liquidated the non-Aryan races living in the land and they also fought among themselves for supremacy in the country. At first, there was no organised regular army in existence and the whole tribal people fought under the leadership of their own chiefs when occasion arose. Although the Aryans were at daggers drawn with each other, they were always united when faced with a common danger. In warfare the use of chariots drawn by horses was a common feature. Fighting forces were organised as *Patti*, *Senamukha*, *Gulma*, *Gana*, *Vahini*, *Anikini* and *Aksauhini* etc. *Patti* was the smallest unit. The weapons used in battle were classified into *Mukta* and *Amukta*. There were also uses of mystical weapons, which the warriors could use at their will. But above all, the bow and arrow dominated the ancient war scene. The reference of elephant corps as a means of destruction of the enemy is mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. They brought havoc and disorder in the enemy ranks very quickly. In ancient India, the elephant was a means of transport in peace time and a combatant one during war. The lines of elephants in the battle fields were as strong as invincible and unconquerable. It is reported that even Seluccus made use of Indian war elephants in his fight against Philedelphus.

The Vedas mention of wars in air and seas in the past. A full chapter has been devoted to the art of the construction of flying machines in *Samarangana Sutradhara* by Bhoj. Penetration into outer space and solar regions has been mentioned in many old scriptures found in the archives of ancient days. Rama Chandra is stated to have flown from Lanka to Ayodhya in a *Vimana*. The Aryans were good warriors with adventurous skill famed for strategical knowledge and acclaimed as great heroes in many legends of the land. But they failed to defend their homeland against the onrush of the hordes of Central Asian cavalry nomads equipped with stirrups and guns, which brought a revolution in the art of warfare. The Indian corps of elephants for defence met with utter failure confronted with the warriors on horse back who were better skilled in planned movements of their troops.

From the very ancient time Indian states developed the art of diplomacy in the field of foreign relation. In the *Rig Veda*, there is a mention that Sudas, winning over five allies in the north-west Indian states, defeated the combined strength of ten kings at Parusni. Thus the necessity of cultivating good and friendly relations with neighbouring

states was practised by the Aryans. In the great Epic Ramayana, Rama's exploits in the South speak of his wisdom in making friends with the *Vanar* race known for their material spirit, which paved the way for defeating Ravana, the tyrant of Lanka. In the Mahabharata, the whole Aryan race was divided into two camps of Kauravas and Pandavas who fought the epic battle at Kurukshetra. Both the sides had many allies behind them. In that Epic, Krishna played the role of a great diplomat. His peace missions having been failed that the great battle ensued. There is mention of the name of Vidura who was a neutral keeping himself aloof from the two contending sides.

At the time of the Buddha, there were sixteen states in India north of Avanti according to the Buddhist scriptures, who were embroiled in mutual strifes and jealousies. There existed no central power to control over the whole land, which paved the way for the downfall of Indian kings at the hands of foreign invaders. The defeat of king Porus by the army of Alexander brought a great set-back to the independent existence of small states in India. The disunity among the princes had been a prime factor which led to their downfall and it was the Raja of Ambi who unbolted the door of India to facilitate the entry of the Greek king on the soil of India. It was Chandra Gupta Maurya who built an empire which was renowned all over the world for its prowess. His successor Asoke became great as he was a pious king and had faith in Dharma firms. His gospel was of the rule of *Right* and not of *Might* which made him stand high 'as humanity's first teacher of universal morality and religion.' He castigated and renounced war and enjoined upon his successors to give up arms for conquest and resort to *Dharma Vijay*. It has been said by many scholars that this attitude of pacifism prompted him to a course of action which brought disastrous effect to the empire of his successors. During his rule, Asoke made contacts with many Indian states and established diplomatic relations with many foreign lands through his Missions of *Peace* and *Dharma*.

After Asoke, Kanishka, a ruler of the Kushan dynasty, of the Yue-chi tribe stands aloft for having made contacts with foreign lands. He had closer communications with China on the one hand and with the Roman empire on the other. He had an insatiable lust for world dominion and made continuous aggressive campaigns to achieve his aims. After the downfall of the Kushans, Chandra Gupta of the Gupta dynasty had built up a great empire uniting many parts of India through alliances and cultivation of good relations with the



neighbours. His marriage with Kumara Devi, a princess of the Lachavi clan brought him glory and power which gave him the status of a Maharajadhiraj, the Lord paramount. Samudra Gupta played a role of an aggressive monarch, expanding his kingdom at the expense of his neighbours and came to be called the Indian Napoleon by modern historians. Harisena's inscription on a pillar found at Allahabad speaks of his relations with Singhala and other islands on political plain. Many foreign rulers took pride in getting their sovereignty recognised by him with the submission of personal loyalty. Once he received an Ambassoder with gifts from Meghavarna, king of Ceylon. The Gupta period brought a great social development in the country, including its military might and progress in culture and thought. Heavily armed cavalry troops were the pride of the state forces, and the army as such was an excellent one in aggressive and offensive actions.

Harshavardhan had a large army of 6000 war elephants and 100,000 cavalymen. During his rule special care was taken to recruit fighting forces on the basis of hereditary lines. At his time Pulkesan II, a great leader of a martial race was his counterpart in the South. South India played a major role in furthering relation with the peoples of the South East Asia through commerce and trade and thus carrying the banner of Indian culture abroad. Radha Kumud Mookerji writing about peace which India always enjoyed says : 'Such international outlook and colonial activities are the product of a condition of equilibrium whereby the Mother country, enjoying peace at home and the blessing of an ordered government, not troubled by political unrest or unsettlement, became a live self-conscious unit, expressing itself in a variety of political and creative movements, economic and cultural.'

India enjoyed a big status in the international field and the neighbouring states looked towards it for guidance in social and spiritual matters, for a long time. But its downfall came when its mighty empires were broken to pieces, giving place to disunity and disintegration of the people and the Muslim hordes imbued with the spirit of spreading the faith of the *Prophet* entered into it practically with no opposition and conquered India to rule for many generations.

#### F. Navigation

India never lived in isolation. From ancient times she had relations with outside world making her cultural influence felt beyond the limits of her frontiers. The adventurous sons of India were

prompted to explore new territories across seas and mountains beyond the borders of India. Missionary zeal of the *Buddhists* and Hindus made them to visit foreign lands and settle there. In these missions through the South Seas, navigation played an important role. Indians plied ships at far off lands and manufactured vessels of various types. In the South-East Asia numerous Indian colonies were established; Champa and Cambodia were two kingdoms being very important among them. The early Aryans were imbued with adventurous spirit and naval expeditions were their chief enterprises in the Indian Ocean. The two great Epics also make references to the naval expeditions in the early days. According to P. Thomas, Indians were adventurous and stated to be the boldest seafarers in Asia but it was not looked with favour. He says: 'The ban on sea-going was imposed not out of an innate love of indolence as was generally supposed but rather as a check on large scale emigration that tended to depopulate the motherland. This restriction imposed by the stalwarts could not be complied with in toto. Even the Brahmins were exported to help the Aryans living abroad in the performance of their religious functions.' It appears in the code of Manu that men having knowledge and experience about the voyage on seas and journey by land could be perfect in fixing interest on money lent on risk. According to this reference, sea voyage must have been in existence long before Manu compiled his code. It is also said that an enterprising Indian prince in the name of Vijay went to Ceylon over the sea more than 2500 years ago.

The Great Alexander is said to have got together a fleet on the upper waters of the Hydaspes and began his voyage along the banks of the Punjab rivers to the sea. During the Mauryan rule foreign trade of India was in a very prosperous condition. Pataliputra had become a cosmopolitan city bringing many visitors and merchants from various parts of Europe and Asia. Goods were carried by Indian vessels across the Indian Ocean to the mouth of the Tigris and to Aden. Tamralipti became a renowned sea port taking the place of Champa. The shipping industry was highly developed and as a result Kautilya made elaborate regulations for its control, in his *Arthashastra*. The mariners of India did not lack in resources and courage in their enterprise of crossing seas and oceans. During the rule of Asoke, his peace missions for the propagation of *Buddhism* were sent to the courts of many rulers abroad breaking the national frontiers through land and sea both.



Indian mariners were acquainted with regular course of the monsoons and the secrets of navigation claiming superiority over those of the Egyptians. There is a legend that an Indian navigator passing through the Red Sea was ship-wrecked and subsequently rescued by the coastal guards. He was taken before the king of the land, taught the local dialect and explained to the king the route through which he crossed into the Arabian Sea. It has been said that India had a great maritime power which established numerous dominions in Indo China, Java, Borneo and Sumatra in the beginning of the Christian era. Java came under colonisation of Hindu settlers hailing from Gujrat and Orissa. Aji Saka was the first prince to go there in 75 A. D. but he had to return soon owing to a great pestilence that broke out there. In 603 A. D. another prince of Gujrat went there taking with him men of various trades, and settled down there permanently.

Maritime activities were not confined to the northern part of India only, it made great strides in the South also. The Pallavas and the Chalukyas gave much encouragements and impetus to their people who were engaged in navigation. Many coins of those days bearing emblem of ship have been found which justify the claim that India had a great navy and a developed navigation. The adventurous souls not only carried the name of India to far-off lands but also played an important part in the establishment of the Indian empire in the South-East Asia, which came to be known as Greater India in course of time.

### G. Arts

Art is the symbol of the culture to which it belongs, acquiring its style of expression in relation to it. It is an expression of the speechless rhythm of the soul. It is said that before man got the expression of speech, the movement of the limbs came to his assistance. The culture of India was always spiritual and the development of all arts took place against this background. Hamid Raza describing Indian art writes : 'The reality of Indian art consists in the relation of the forms of the visible world, with an inner rhythm interfusing the forms as well as the artist. The rhythm embodies, all Indian creation. If all art is propaganda, Indian art seem to have been employed as a medium of conveying spiritual truths.'

Always the art of India has been of religious nature. The persons who were founders and makers of Indian art were craftsmen imbued with religious inspirations. They devoted all their energies impressing



the religious stamps on it. But side by side with this religious motive there also existed secular tendencies which depicted human life in all its reactions. Basham writes : 'In our opinion the usual inspiration of Indian art is not so much a ceaseless quest for the *Absolute*, as delight in this world as the artist found it, as regular and organic as the growth of living things upon earth.'

Indian art was hieratic, devoted to the exposition of the personality and acts of deities. Authoritative ancient Text books declare that the making of images of deities leads to heaven. It is said 'Indian art was not produced with a view to aesthetic experience, not even regarded as art. Images, in particular, were not regarded as works of art but as means of edification.' Indian art has certain guiding principles, ever-recurring features, a constancy of approach. Indian sculptors, painters and architects, all through the ages remained true to their ideals of beauty. Supporting this view Charles Louis Fabri writes in his article on pre-historic art : 'After a study of Indian art for thirty years I can assert with confidence that I do not know of any element, any feature or characteristic that persisted in Indian art for more than a thousand years.'

Further he writes : 'The fascinating variations of style and approach not only make truer picture of the vicissitudes of Indian art through the ages, it is also for more useful a guide to the understanding of this great complex, India.'

Indian art has undergone various changes in forms through the ages owing to political, social and religious upheavals. The Aryans and the early *Buddhists* used wooden materials for their architecture and we do not find any exhibits of them pertaining to that period before Asoke, except the Indus Valey remains. The Mauryan art being worked under the mastery of Greeks and other foreigners was exceptionally fine but actually the Indian art got its final form when Gupta rulers offered patronage to the study of art, literature and science in their kingdom. As the art of a country is a rich treasure reflecting its culture and civilization, so Indian art too gives an impression of the heritage of our ancient days and clearly points out the way of life the people led. The art testifies the religious spirit which had dominated the minds of the Indians through out all the ages. It was national in character in which spirltual beliefs have been deified.

### H. Architecture and Sculpture

In the old legends *Shiva* has been depicted as the architect of the

*Universe* who is said to have given birth to *Silpa Sastra*, the source of all early architecture and sculpture. These treatises were compiled by the *Silpis* or architects. The *Puranas* deal with the secular character of art. Govinda Krishna Pillai writing about this class of *Silpis* says : 'The *Silpis* appear to have been pioneers in the fields of art and science ; their contribution stands high in the fields of mathematics and astronomy ; in art and architecture too ; though our taste may differ from theirs, they made gigantic strides and made every attempt to reduce them to sciences.'

India of pre-Mauryan period did not have any architecture except a few remains of the Indus Valley civilization which too were not of much aesthetic merit. Timber was mostly in use and palaces were built of carved and gilded wood. Asoke was the first ruler in India to have brought stone in use for architecture. The artistic designs in his palace were under Persian influence but those were gone when Asoke became a *Buddhist*. The Asoke Pillars at Sarnath stand as a perfect model of able architecture. The pillars known as lion Capital has four lions standing back to back and under it there is a frieze having figures of elephant and a wheel. The stone sculpture of Mauryan period is the pride of the Indian Museum. Having been exquisitely finished with a brilliant polish, they have not lost their original lustre even today. The monolithic pillars of Asoke on which he caused engraved edicts are made of one-piece of stone. Dr. R. C. Majumdar writing about them says :—'A high degree of knowledge of engineering was displayed in cutting these huge blocks of stone or removing them hundred of miles from the quarry and sometimes to the top of a hill. Extraordinary technical skill was shown in cutting and chiselling the stone with wonderful accuracy and in imparting the lustrous polish to the whole surface. But these pale into insignificance before the high artistic merits of figures which exhibit realistic modelling and movement of a very high order. The earliest stone figures found go back only to Asoke but it does not mean that there was no skill before him.'

Asoke built many *Stupas* all over India in honour of the *Buddha*. The *Stupa* was nothing but generally a burial mound. It contained a central hall, to preserve the relics of the saint, with large hemispherical dome. Crowned with a spire it had a stone rail around it. The unburnt bricks were used for building the core of the *Stupas*, while the burnt bricks made the outside body of the building. One of the famous *Stupas* is at Sanchi whose gateway is renowned for ornamentation,



though from the point of view of technique it is of primitive style. Its glory lies chiefly in its rhythmic beauty and symmetry. There are many delicate carvings of religious symbolic expressions. The *Stupas* at Bharhut and Amaravati are of great importance from the architectural point of view, being ornate built on square platforms. The tall *Stupa* known as Dhamekha at Sarnath is a cylindrical one whose upper dome is a beautiful work of bricks. The *Stupa* at Nalanda is a tall one having undergone many changes with the passage of time. It has been generally admitted that the pillars and other artistic works were the finished products of foreign artists and India excelled in her indigenous art under the Gupta rule.

The cave temple was another wonderful specimen of craftsmanship which served as a place of peaceful abode for the monks who wandered in the wilderness renouncing the world. One of the oldest and finest of cave temples is at Karle whose free rhythm, grace and elegance are of exceptional character. The caves at Ajanta are the specimens of composite art being half architecture and half sculpture. These caves numbering 29 are self contained monastic establishments, with sufficient accommodation for the monks to live there. The temples at Ellora are the exhibits of splendid achievements of those days in the field of art. The Kailashnath temple is renowned for its grace and splendour.

In addition to the innumerable images, the temples are decorated with statues and relief work. According to Elphinstone: "they are sometimes very spirited, and neither the sculptures nor paintings fail to produce very fine specimens of grace in figure and attitude but there is a total ignorance of anatomy and an inattention even to the obvious appearance of the limbs and muscles, together with a disregard of proportion between different figures, and a want of skill in grouping, which must entirely exclude the best of the Hindu sculpture from coming into the most remote comparison with European works of art."

A large number of edifices erected by the ancient people show their mastery over the knowledge of practical architecture. All arts grew into prosperity under the Gupta rulers' patronage. At that period Buddhism had ceased to be hostile towards images and the revived Brahminism gave encouragement to symbolism bringing a closer contact between thoughts and art impulses. The temples having pyramidal spires standing majestically by the side of lakes or rivers, are the wonderful works of ancient India. Their grandeur and magnificence fired the lusts of many invaders who crossed into India



to ransack them. The temples which escaped their wraths were the temples of Khajuraho, Bhubaneswar and Konark.

The Bodh-Gaya temple is one of the most impressive ones having great significance for its *Gothic* arches. The *Jain* temple at Aihole is made in Grecian style with rectangular form, having a portico and a central hall. The temples in the Northern India have preference for a tower with round tops and curvilinear outlines, while the temples in the South resemble rectangular truncated pyramids. "The temple had the symbolical meaning in its base, the wall and the spire, corresponding to Earth, the intervening space and Heaven, or in other words, the Feet, the body and the Head of the Cosmic man." In the South, the temple building activity began in the seventh century A.D.

The architecture and sculpture of ancient India reached the highest rung during the Gupta rule which was its Golden Age. The images of stone and bronze were the finest production of the age which Indian art gave to the coming generation. The art was dominated by intellectual spirit of realism leaving no room for emotional exhibition and display of decorative elements. The art of casting metals was the wonderful achievement of the age. The iron pillar at Delhi is said to have been manufactured under the Gupta rulers drawing admiration from all over the world. The Pallava architecture became a standard bearer not only in India but reached the colonies in the Far East. The Cholas also made a great contribution which was much appreciated by all. The Siva temple at Tanjore of 190 feet height having the dome of a single piece of stone at its head, stands as a unique creation of architecture of the Indian people.

Many different schools of art grew at Mathura, Gandhara, Sarnath and Amaravati. The schools at Mathura and Gandhara came into being under the patronage of Kushan kings and claimed to be the pioneers to have produced the images of the *Buddha*. The Mathura art was under the influence of Jainism. The later Mathura art gave the *Buddha* a human form, while the *Lord* was represented in a symbolic fashion. The Indian art was not bound down by the principles of ethics, ideas of mortal and the finite. The general outlook was always spiritual and emotional.

The *Gandhara* school which flourished in the North-West of India developed under the Hellenistic influence. This influence was mainly responsible in bringing a change in ideas and technique both.

It lacked the spiritual touch which was predominant in the art of ancient India. The *Buddha* images of the *Gandhara* school did not give a spiritual look but those had grace and beauty. It is said that the *Gandharan* Type of art belonged to a period of aesthetic decadence. Its graces were deliberate, indisposed and spiritless. Its realism did not show structural reality. Rawlinson describing this hybrid school of art writes: 'The whole range of Imperial imagery was used to portray events from Buddha's life and the Buddha himself repeated the type of an early Imperial toga status.'

The most important centres of the Indo-Greek or *Gandhara* school were at Jalalabad, Hadda and Bamiyan in Afghanistan, the Swat Valley and in the Peshawar district. The earlier *Gandhara* sculptures, both in relief and in the round were usually of grey slate. These were more purely Greek in type than the later stucco examples. The Buddha while usually retaining his essential characteristics, was stylistically Hellenic; his features were Greek rather Indian, and he wore his monastic robe treated like classical drapery.' Dr. R. C. Majumdar describing this art, writes: 'The *Gandhara* sculptures accordingly offer a striking contrast to what we meet elsewhere in India, viz, the smooth round features of the idealised human figures, draped in a transparent or semi-transparent cloth, closely fitting to the body and revealing its outlines'.

Commenting on art, Rapson writes in his book, *Ancient India* :— The Indian had not yet conceived the bold and, as some think, chimerical idea of thus incarnating spirit in matter. Art to him was a thing apart, a sensuous, concrete expression of the beautiful, which appealed intimately to his subconscious aesthetic sense, but in which neither intellectuality nor mysticism had any share. For the rest, he found in the formative arts a valuable medium in which to narrate in simple and universal language, the legend and history of 'his faiths, and this was mainly why, for the sake of its lucidity and dramatic power, he welcomed with avidity and absorbed the lessons of Hellenistic art, not because he sympathised with its ideals or saw in it the means of giving utterance to his own.'

The *Gandhara* school of art had a considerable span of life in India but gradually its influence came to an end, for the reason that it could not impress and influence on the other parts of the country. In course of time, it began to be Indianised based on primitive energy and without any pretension to grace. Thus, India produced a peculiar type of beauty in many sphere of arts but the continuity was broken and



interrupted owing to many foreign invasions in different periods of history.

### J. PAINTING

The tradition of painting in India dates back to the ancient time. The origin of painting in India refers to an interesting story mentioned in an old legend. *Lord Brahma* taught a king the art of bringing back to life the dead son of a Brahmin, by making a portrait of the dead man and thus sending it to *Yama* as a substitute for the dead youth. Painting as an art was highly developed in India since the Epic days. It is said that there are many references in the *Ramayana* describing painted halls. The palaces of ancient kings and the residential houses of wealthy people were decorated with paintings on walls and columns.

The rock-cut cave temples with their beautiful murals and frescoes were the creations of the early artists of India. The *Vinay Pitaka* refers to *Pasenada*, a king, whose palace was adorned with painted pictures. The Chinese travellers too testified to the existence of excellent murals on the walls of temples and buildings. The *Jataka* too make references to painted decorations prevalent at that time. The artistic objects excavated from the Indus Valley ruins speak of the highly developed design and technical excellence of the pictographic seals found there.

Paintings on the walls of Ajanta cave temples are considered as the finest achievements of the *Buddhist* artists. Durant writing about these paintings says: 'Once these frescoes were brilliant with red green, blue and purple pigments; nothing survives of the colours now except low-toned and blackened surfaces. Some of the paintings, thus obscured by time and ignorance seem coarse and grotesque to us, who cannot read the *Buddhist* hearts; others are at once powerful and graceful, a revelation of the skill of craftsmen whose names perished long before their work.' These paintings made by unknown artists in the early centuries of Christian era are said to be an apogee of attainment hardly having an equal even in later periods.

Commenting on the paintings of Ajanta, Griffiths in his book 'Ancient India' writes: In spite of its obvious limitations, I find the work so accomplished in execution, so consistent in convention, so vivacious and varied in design, and full of such evident delight in beautiful form and colour, that I cannot help ranking it with some of the early arts which the world has agreed to praise in Italy.....The Ajanta workmanship is admirable, long subtle curves are drawn with great precision in a line of unvarying thickness with one sweep of the brush; the



touch is often bold and vigorous, the handling broad, and in some cases the impaste is as solid as in the best Pompeian work.....The draperies too are thoroughly understood, and though the fold may be some what conventionally drawn, they express most thoroughly the peculiarities of the Oriental treatment of unstewn cloth..... For the purpose of art education, no better examples could be placed before an Indian art student than those to be found in the caves of Ajanta. Here we have art with life in it, human faces full of expression, limbs drawn with grace and action. 'Flowers which bloom birds which soar, and beasts that spring or fight, or patiently carry burdens, all are taken from Nature's book-growing after her pattern, and in this respect differing entirely from Muhammadan art, which is unreal, unnatural, and therefore incapable of development.'

The Ajanta frescoes generally illustrate the *Jatakas*-narrating the previous lives of the *Buddha*. These are considered the highest attainments of pictorial art in India.

### K. Music and Dancing.

The history of music is as old as the human civilization. It had its origin in India along with the compositions of the Vedic hymns which were meant for recitation and singing. In India, singing and dancing became essential parts in the performance of all religious rites and functions, because through music alone the feelings of the people could be aroused and sustained.

During the *Gatha* period of the *Rig Vedic* Aryan music developed chiefly two notes viz. *Udatta* and *Anudatta*. The *Sama Veda* was composed during the Period of *Tune*, when music was given a better and systematic expression. *Svarita* was another innovation of that great period, and in it both the notes of *Udatta* and *Anudatta* were combined. The Aryans were fully acquainted with heptatonic scale and in their hands the science of music made rapid progress towards systematic development. According to the ancient mythology there is a story that once Narada was reprimanded by Vishnu for his careless playing of music and in course of time he turned out to be a perfect artist. It is further said that it was Narada who taught music to the men of this earth. The goddess of learning Saraswati has been painted in portraits as seated on a Lily and playing on her *Veena*. The *Ramayana* was sung by young Lava and Kusha for the first time in the presence of their august royal father Rama.

At a later stage, the *Vedic* music came under critical observation of the heretics and they declared it to be devoid of melody and charm. It began to be looked down upon on account of its rigid rules as compared with the native songs. Even Manu, the great sage, called it impure in sound. The result was that the *Vedic* music gradually went out of use and its place was taken by folk songs which were very popular with the people. Everything of the *Vedic* music and its notes were totally forgotten by the succeeding generations. After many centuries the *Marga* music was popularised by the *Gandharvas*, a class of residents of *Gandhara*, who used *Veena* accompanying their songs.

The *Natyasastra* has been considered to be the earliest authority on Indian music. It contains more than thirty *Ragas* but six of them viz. *Bhairava*, *Kausika*, *Hindola*, *Dipak*, *Sriraga* and *Megha* are taken to be original. It has also their counterparts in *Raginis*. These *Ragas* have been considered as occult powers possessed by the benediction of the goddess of Music. In general these *Ragas* lacked harmony and symphony and as a result grace-notes were indispensable for emphasising the distinction of moments in the process of tunes. All aspects of music viz *suara*, *sruti groma*, *murchana* and *jati* find clear mention in this sastra. *Naradiya-Siksha* is a development on the *Natya-sastra*. An elaborate treatment of *ragas* has been made in the *Brihad-desi* of Matanga written in the 8th or 9th century A. D.

In ancient India music was always a popular art receiving patronage of the kings and the subjects both. Samudra Gupta was not only a poet but also he was a great musician. The position of bards, minstrels and musicians were very high in society and no festival, social or religious was complete without the participation of musicians. Music-vocal and instrumental both were in vogue. F. W. Galpin writes : 'From this great country, so rich in musical emotion, its little offspring was borne by Arab traders from the Western coast to their own land and to Persia in the seventh and eighth centuries and there also applied to the small lutes already in use, like the flutes. It soon afterwards sped Westward again, through Byzantine commercial routes and North African invasions, to adorn as the legacy of India, the highest attainments of our European music. This view of Galpin has been supported by Hunt. According to him : 'The Brahmins had also an art of music of their own. The seven notes which they invented, at least four centuries before Christ, passed through the Persians to Arabia and were thence introduced into European music in the eleventh century A. D.'



Like the philosophers, the musicians reached the infinite, starting from finite and carrying their soul into close union with the *Supreme Being*. In India, music, once the handmaid of religion, reached the wide social sphere touching every aspect of human life whether in festivals, in royal courts, in fairs or in the inner apartments of the ladies. The popular instruments of music were Veena, flute and Nagaswaram, etc.

### L. Dancing.

The art of dance has been practised in India since the early time of history. The ancient tradition regards god *Shiva* as the founder of the art of dance. He is said to be the embodiment of cosmic energy and is represented as *Nataraja*, the apostle of cosmic dance. His dance symbolized the rhythmic movement of the Universe. He is depicted as a *Yogi* and by the process of his dance he has created oneness of soul and body and the unity of *Being* into consciousness.

Whatever might be the origin of dance, it had developed a systematic refinement, effecting considerable amount of body exercise. It was very popular with the Aryans, rich and poor. The bronze nude figure of a dancing girl found among the excavated remains of *Mohenjo-daro* is considered to be a wonderful piece of art which points out that the art of dancing had been of an old origin. The Indus Valley people were well advanced in this art.

There is found a reference in *Jaiminiya Brahmana* about singers, dancers, apsaras and lutes. The *Jatakas* also mention about the dancing girls lulling Kalabu to sleep, who took dancing as professional art. The *Bharata Natyasastra* gives a detailed narration of the movements and gestures of all the limbs of the body including those of the hands gestures which are most expressive in style. The *Sutras of Silalin* and *Krishasvin* have been referred as authority on the art of dance by Panini, the scholar. *Abhinayadarpana* of Nandikeshvara is another important work of repute on the art of dancing.

In course of time, *Bharat Natyam*, *Kathakali*, *Manipuri* and *Kathak* were the four classical schools of dance developed under local and foreign technique. *Bharat Natyam* belonged to Tamil Nad, while *Kathakali* was the dance drama of Kerala, both accepted *Natyasastra* as authority. The former art was generally practised by womenfolk and the latter by manfolk. The *Kathak* came into existence as a mixture of *Bharat Natyam* and *Kathakali*. The Manipuri dance reflected *Rashlila* of Radha and Krishna.

In ancient society dance was very popular and commanded a

place of honour. The *Buddha* once became a guest in the house of a dancing girl and took meal there, even offending the nobilities of the land. Chandra Gupta had a host of slave girls, who always entertained him by their dance and songs. The Maurya administration had a superintendent to look after the profession of these dancing girls. During the Gupta period dance became closely associated with drama. It was one of the main forms of worshipping gods and goddesses. The Brahmins chanted *Vedic* hymns every morning to awaken the gods in the Temple, while the *devadas* is danced along the tunes. But dance fell into disrepute after the decline of the Guptas. *Hiuen Tsang* who visited India during Harsha's rule found the class of dancers living in the disreputable quarters of the city in the midst of butchers, scavengers and fishermen.



## SECTION II EDUCATION

### A. Indus Valley

With the coming to light of the Indus Valley civilization the history of India has been pushed back much further than was till now commonly supposed. This civilization extended over an area of 1000 miles, east to west, beginning from the sea coast of Beluchistan to the foot of Simla Hills. This civilization was of very high order. The people lived there in pucca houses made of burnt bricks. They were people knowing the art of reading and writing and this can be seen from the pictographic seals found there. The artistic style of the seals bearing tri-murti, i. e., the three headed horned god and the sacred bull shows that the people of Indus Valley civilization were highly educated. This highly skilled art and method of writing could not have been developed by an uneducated nation. But our curiosity for more knowledge about that civilization cannot be satisfied till the deciphering of the seals found in Mohenjo-daro, Harrappa and Rupar, are properly done, in course of time.

### B. Vedic Period.

Although no authentic record is available about the educational system in the pre-Aryan times, yet it could be taken that the people were well educated in those days, because of the fact that the period compiled the *Rig Veda*, the encyclopaedia of the treasures of knowledge written in hymns.

The *Deveshita*, *Vipra* or the teacher in ancient India imparted to his pupils knowledge that he obtained through revelation by meditation. He was a saint, leading a life of penance and austerity in pursuit of *Mukti* or *Moksha* and that was the principle aim of his education. He selected a calm and quiet place to pursue his meditation. This led him to communion with God, resulting in revelations which were the sources of true knowledge to him. The knowledge thus obtained, he imparted to his disciples in Vedic language, who came to take lessons from him accepting him as a *Guru*. His real knowledge emanated from his *Gyan Chakshu*. i. e., the eye of knowledge, brought into active play by a process of meditations and deep and prolonged concentration of mind. This spiritual knowledge raised one from the lowest to the highest rung. The knowledge of the absolute thus obtained was carried from the father to the son and so

to the posterity, keeping the monopoly of the family and leading to the growth of family schools.

During those days education aimed at teaching piety and building up of character of individuals. *Dharma* was the pivot on which the whole educational system, religious and spiritual in essence revolved. Knowledge, with emphasis on the development of individual personality, was the aim to be achieved. The *Brahmachari* (the student who remained celibate during the period of studies was called) prayed to *Savitri*, the goddess, to stimulate his intellect for higher intelligence bringing knowledge both material and transcendental. The *Gayatri Mantram* was the prayer for him to attain the highest goal, the mental power leading to enlightenment. Thus the insatiable thirst for knowledge not only of temporal but also of the eternal was deep rooted in the *Rig Vedic* culture.

✓ The instruction of the teacher was called *Vidhi* and his explanations, were *arthavada*. The student was to get education in the house of his *Guru* in company with others. The system of education was based on personal and direct supervision of the teacher.) The teacher admitted the student after he was satisfied with the moral fitness and good conduct of the applicant. (It is to be noted that there has been found no reference of the *Upanayan* ceremony of the *Brahmachari* in the *Rig Veda*.) But every primitive race observed some sort of ceremony to mark the admission of the boy as a full fledged member to their society and it is believed that there must have been some sort of ceremony prevalent among them during the *Vedic* age as was the *Navjot* ceremony performed by the Indo-Iranians.

In ancient India all the instruction of the teacher was oral. The revealed knowledge was given by the teacher to his pupils who sat near his feet with sacred fire burning by the side. (The students repeated the lessons collectively and thus learnt them by rote.) The teacher was active in his mental endeavour when he made an attempt to adjust his teachings to the mental equipment of his wards. Repetition was very essential and indispensable, as it ensured lasting impression upon the minds of the young scholars. / Imitation like repetition was in vogue among the scholars of the past in the *Rig Vedic* period. Thus the art of chanting *mantras* had developed into a fine art. The memorization of the *Vedic mantras* and the necessity to comprehend its meaning was considered to be a divine spiritual efficiency, otherwise, one was considered to be a fool. / The sense perception, intelligence, imagination, heredity and environment all together played an



important part in preparing the minds of the pupils. The ideal character and the way of living of the revered *Guru* left a marvellous impression on the student, thus enabling them to lead a better life during their *Grahashti* period.

The subject of study was the composite *Vedic* literature. Persons intending to adopt priesthood had to commit to memory the details of the rituals. One had to undergo a triple training, i. e., to learn the duties of *Hotri*, *Udgatri* and *Advarya*, to be an expert in all the three branches of sacrifice. The construction of altars for sacrifices necessitated the learning of geometry. The performances of *Yajna* had an important role in education. Different selected hymns were committed to memory by agriculturists, artisans and martial people for using them in their respective professions in life. The attainment of supreme knowledge was not confined to one sect of people or the other. The non-Aryans were also admitted to the temples of learning in ancient days. The Kshatriya class also produced many seers who rose to great heights through education and meditation.

### C. The later Vedic period

The majority of the people were literate and every function whether on religious affairs, trade or warfare started with a hymn from the *Vedas* to secure success. This period was dominated by the study of *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Brahmanas*. The *Samhitas* were compiled to enable the *Udgatri* and *Advarya* priests to carry out their functions efficiently on the occasion of sacrifices as performed in the *Rig Vedic* age. Along with the *Soma* sacrifices, many other domestic sacrifices developed by that time. One could not perform all the functions entrusted to him. The difficulty experienced by the head priest led to the division of labour. Provision had to be made for the training of persons as *Hotri*, *Udgatri*, *Advarya* and thus to help the head priest. The *Hotri* performed his function praising god, reciting particular verses for the particular rite from the *Rig Veda*. The *Udgatri* had to make necessary arrangements for the *Soma* sacrifice and chanted songs suited to the occasion. The *Advarya* carried out his performance practically explaining it in prose and also read out hymns from the *Yajur Veda*. The Brahmin acted as the superintendent having full knowledge and mastery over all the *Vedas*. The hymns were inspirations for supreme knowledge as well as deeds of practical utility, whereas *Brahmanas* were more deeply related to minute details of sacrifices.

After spending a long period in learning the *Vedas* from the teacher, the students had to attend a ceremony called *Samavartana*, and there the *Guru* addressed them not to



show any negligence in study, learning and teaching of the *Vedas*. *Samavartana* was a ceremony where the *Brahmacharis* had to face a volley of questions from an assembly of scholars of repute. Their success in facing the audience with confidence earned them good certificates as scholars. After acquiring great mastery over the *Vedas* and other subsidiary sciences, the students were to enter into their next phase of life. Accordingly some of them went back to their home and settled down to *Grahashta* life and others continued to follow the paths of learning inspired with an urge for gaining more knowledge. With that purpose in view, these scholars roamed from place to place approaching great seers and teachers. These wandering scholars in quest of knowledge and higher learning had their education complete through travels and meeting with seers they discussed about the meanings of the *Vedas* and other scriptures. In course of time, they themselves became teachers and educationists of ancient India. By the end of the *Vedic* period many such roaming teachers were busy in propagating their views throughout the country and that led to develop a reaction against them. The *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* mentions a note of warning to the people to remain cautious against the deceptive methods of those false teachers. In general, education was obligatory but not compulsory. It was universal but without any central authority to enforce it.

According to the *Atharva Veda*, the most important social custom developing in those days was that of *Upanayana*, a ceremony of initiation marking the beginning of education in the career of a boy in the *Vedic* period. The boy had a second birth, i.e., became a *Dvija*, a member of the Aryan society. He was put under the direct surveillance of a *Guru* when he had to leave his parental roof. This was a turning point in his life. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the sacrament of *Upanayana* was of Indo-Iranian origin. It was the occasion when the boy was taught the sacred *Gayatri Mantra*. The origin of *Upanayana* was domestic and became very simple in form but during the later *Vedic* period it turned to be a regulated and systematic ceremony. It was compulsory for both boys and girls.

After this initiation, the boy had to wear skin of black antelope, mekhala of *Kusa* grass and a chord of three threads each having nine twisted strands and removal of which if resorted to, was considered to be a sin and a matter of censure. The *Guru* (the official Brahmin priest) whispered *Gayatri mantra* into the ears of the boy, which he had to repeat many a times during the day. Great stress was laid on this



ceremony in the life of the Aryans and if it was neglected for three generations by Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, they became outcasts. They could be readmitted to the society only after they performed the *Vratya Stoma* ceremony of expiation and penance.

The education system was a comprehensive one, keeping in view the physical, emotional and mental growth of the students in all the institutions. Men and women were equal participants in intellectual life. The elaborate system of higher education under the charge of Brahmins was evolved at a very early period of our history. The essence of teaching consisted in going from simple to the complex form in an evolutionary process. The whole scheme was meant for obtaining knowledge of the *Absolute* which was the ideal aim. The comprehension of the deeper meaning of the *Vedas* led the boy to search for the truth which was meant to be the ultimate knowledge for mankind and failure to obtain it, forced him to frustration and disenchantment which was considered to be the killing of the soul. In the Aryan society, eloquence came to be regarded as a mark of great culture. Importance was attached to clear enunciation and correct pronunciation of the hymns and all imperfections in these arts were looked down upon with contempt by the Aryan society. H. G. Rawlinson describes 'that the rites, simple at first, became more elaborate and stereotyped as time went on. So the rituals had to be carried out with meticulous care, because a slip of tongue would render the whole sacrifice invalid and sinful.'

The curriculum of study was the vast field of *Vedic* and other allied literature. The student had to seek for the *Brahma*, the truth, guided by his preceptor who was the incarnation of truth, *tapa* and sacrifice. The study of *Vedangas* included *kalpa*, *siksha*, *Chhandas*, *Nirukta*, *Vyakaran* and *Jyotisha*. The student had to go through a process of practical training in Industry, Agriculture, Dairy farming and in other handicrafts. Physical training was an important item in the curriculum and the study of language was a compulsory subject for all. In a word, it was an education covering a very wide range of field. In spite of having obtained all the knowledge from the *Vedas* and the *Vedangas*, a man was not considered a complete self, till he had the *Vidya* which could lead him to that light out of darkness, and to the state of immortality.

The *Gurukul* of ancient India was situated far away from the bustles and tumults of town life. It was housed in an environment which was ideal for the purpose, facilitating the fullest development of

the mind. An abode set amidst natural surroundings' in quiet atmosphere, was considered to be the best site for schooling. It was in the apparent knowledge of the ancient *Gurus* and educators that an unhealthy atmosphere retarded the development of genius. At the sametime an ideal environment alone could not achieve the desired effect of imparting the requisite education. Evidently an unintelligent pupil could not become wise even placed in ideal environments. Could good environments change a fool into a wise man? The ancient *Gurus* considered heredity a great factor playing an important role in the life of students becoming genius. To them heredity and environment both were interdependent and necessary for higher education. That was the reason why the preceptors in ancient days always questioned the ancestry of their pupils who approached them to be their disciples. The *Gurukulas* were the domestic schools whose expenses were met by the collection of alms by the pupils from door to door and by the gifts made by the wealthy people of the land as an act of homage to the holy and learned scholars, the topmost men in the spiritual field. After the *Upanayana* the Aryan boy became a *Brahmachari*, thus entering into the life of a student. This system of *Brahmacharya* built through the centuries became the pivot of Indian thought and culture. This path of unostentatious life made a human being the most powerful element, who could even conquer death (*Brahmacharin Tapsa Mrityumpanat*). This was the ideal of the seers of ancient India who reached a stage of development, unknown to the people of other lands.

It is to be remembered that the *Gurukulas* were confined only to the three upper castes of the Aryan society. The lower caste was forbidden to chant even the sacred hymns and the doors of higher education were closed on them. The 'Home' Universities' of ancient India were free from the control of State Governments. All institutions were presided over by great *Vedic* scholars of wisdom with brilliant feats of memory who preserved the *Vedas* for the succeeding generations. To them, education was the great quest for the liberation of the individual soul from the bondage of evil. Evil was considered a denial of good arising out of human ignorance, as a result of the limitation of the *ego*. Education was the means to attain freedom from ignorance and hence from limitation. Knowledge was considered to liberate one from bondage of want and fear. It emphasised to inculcate the spirit of toleration and forbearance and in one sense, the most characteristic virtue of ancient Indian education was to develop within one the principle of disinterested devotion to the cause of humanity.



In ancient India the *Brahmachari* had not only to study, but also had to serve his master, in many ways. He had to collect fuel from the jungle for the sacred fire to keep it burning on. He had to go out every day from door to door begging alms for the maintenance of the *Ashram*. He had to learn about the dignity of labour and earn a spirit of humility. Obedience was a necessity; negligence and deviation from the observance of prescribed rules led to his expulsion from the *Ashram*. He was supposed to regard his *Guru* as his father and the *Guru* was to treat his ward as his own son. There was to be a complete harmony and identification between the teacher and the taught. The dress of the *Brahmachari* was very simple and he had to live a life under physical and spiritual rules. On account of his simple living and good conduct, he was easily distinguishable from his fellow beings. He was an embodiment of asceticism, purity, renunciation and above all of humanity. He was cautioned not to be fastidious about bodily purity and comfort, lest he should be a victim to the awakening of the tender passion in the age of adolescence.

#### D. Upanishadic Period

This period saw the compilation of the *Upanishads* when the *Vedic* rituals of sacrifice became a very complicated affair and its utility began to be questioned. Speculation took root to philosophical grounds. Those who were opposed to the rituals took shelter in the forests; for meditation and brought out *Aranyakas*. The Brahmanical literature had its culmination in the *Vedanta*, i.e., the end of the *Veda*. That was the period of the crowning achievement of the *Vedic* learning. The speculative philosophy of those persons who opposed rituals and sacrifices led to the birth of the *Upanishads*, dealing principally on *Brahman*, the *Absolute*, the phenomenality or unreality of the universe of names and forms. The *Vedic truth* was not within the comprehension of an unaided human intellect. It was only a teacher with varied and direct experience who could guide the students to understand the *Vedas* and the superme knowledge.

A student was admitted to learning of the *Vedanta* provided he came with a pure heart, having no sin to his credit renouncing the unreal and possessing knowledge of the *Vedas* and *Vedangas*. He was expected to be conscious of devotional and obligatory duties, with an urge to acquire knowledge for his liberation from the shackles of worldly life. At first the preceptor tasted the ability and fitness of the student aspiring to seek for knowledge. Liberty of thought and action were kept in view while preparing the curriculum of studies. Mere knowledge was not

the ultimate aim of education. But it was a means of attainment of right attitude in life. The Student went to *Gurukul* with a burning light in his hand and prayed to *Guru* for admission which was granted after the aspirant could answer certain enquiries satisfactorily. While getting education, the *Brahmachari* had to work for the teacher in the field, in his house and in the *Yajnasala*.

The regulations treating the subject of relation between the teacher and the taught were first compiled in *Brhama Sutra* dating 500 B. C. The *Sutra* dealt extensively with *Dharma* and education. *Dharma* was, what one was expected to do in life. It included ideas of pious law, duty, justice, religion and morals. The sage *Manu* specially framed code for guidance of the pupils at *Gurukul*. The code meant certain 'don'ts' for the pupils. The freedom was curtailed enabling him to lead a life of celibacy in thought and action without indulging in frivolities. *Manu* enjoined upon the teacher not to withhold any part of sacred literature from his pupil. He was not to have any commercial and mercenary motive. The rich and poor were treated, on equal footing. The *Brahmachari* was also supposed to expound, interpret and explain what he had learnt. The debates were the testing ground where every scholar had to show his excellence. The difference between the spoken dialect and the *Vedic* language led to the growth of a class of commentators, lexicographers and etymologists.

The main stress was on the memorisation of the *Vedas* by the students. To help the students in this art *Vayakarna*, *Ayurveda*, *Jyotisha* *Nyaya Sastra* and others were made into verses. Although writing was in practice in the beginning of the first millenium B.C. yet it was oral learning which was in force. The hand-written manuscripts were not easily accessible. The rules of prosody and rhetorics enabled the *Vedic* students to memorise *Vedic* hymns, because there was no written manuscripts of the *Vedas*, as it was considered irreligious to have it done. There was no corporal punishment for the student in existence, although the use of a thin rope and a cane was allowed. *Manu* admitted the striking on the back part of the body and not the noble parts. The *Brahmachari* was subordinated to the strict authority and household discipline of the teacher. After the termination of his education, he was to attend at the *Samavartana* ceremony where he had to face an assembly of learned scholars. Paying his *Guru rina*, the student left for his parental home with the blessings of the teacher. The *Guru rina* was paid in the form of a present of a field, a cow or a horse. Sometime the *Guru* was satisfied with the promise



of his pupil that he would further the cause of teaching what he had learnt in *Gurukula*.

The period of education was twelve years for each *Veda* to be studied. In all forty eight years were required for the mastery over the four *Vedas*. The annual term of study was about five months. There was a large number of holidays. There were two kinds of knowledge. One was *Apara Vidya* (lower) and the other one was *Para Vidya* (higher) according to Manduka. The lower knowledge consisted of the *Vedas* and *Vedangas* meant for the social and material welfare without creating any permanent result. It was a knowledge of *Dharma* and *Adharma*. The higher knowledge, i.e., the *Para Vidya*, known as *Brahmavidya* was the fountain of eternal knowledge. The *Upanished* called this knowledge as *Brahman*, a part of the *Vedas* not concerned with rituals, leading one to the liberation of his soul from the bondage of materialism. According to Manduka, supreme knowledge could be attained by *Tapa*, *Brahmacharya*, *Vidhi*, *Sradha* and by the conquest of desires and by emancipation of the soul from the fetters of worldly life.

The ancient kings of India were great scholars. They stole away time from their day to day life for the study of sacred literature. They were greatly connected with intellectual life of the country. They were high patrons of education; they offered financial help to the *Gurukulas* which imparted education to the rich and the poor alike. Under the royal patronage the scholars met in debates. It is mentioned in the old scriptures that *Yajnavalkya*, the great scholar, won a rich prize from a king after defeating his opponents in debate.

#### E. The later Upanishadic period

Along with the development of Upanishad, many special schools of philosophy, such as *Sankhya* and *Yoga*, the *Nyaya* and the *Vaisesika*, *Vedanta* and the *Mahayana Buddhism*, developed in India, which led to the great progress in critical thought and speculation. During those days *Smriti Puranas* and *Nabandhas* were compiled. The *Smritis* brought a great effect on the educational set up of the time. The girls were debarred from ritual and prayers. The marriagable age of the girls was lowered in the society. The Upanayan ceremony, marking the beginning of educational life for the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas became a formal one without its real contents. Several centres of education grew up for the first time with the support of the government and individuals, which offered educational opportunity to a larger number of people. Temples became the educational sites

and Sanskrit was the medium of instruction.

The withering away of the *Gurukula* system, introduction of Sanskrit, debarring of girls from education and the extinction of the *Upanayana* ceremony, all together gave a serious blow to the progress of education during that period. Education became out of reach of many classes of people. Agriculture of the country was neglected because there remained no *Brahmachari* to work in the fields of his preceptor. All the existing institutions were on the way to decadence till the seventh century A. D. when India made a further progress in the field of education. The *Vidyapiths* founded by Shankracharya and the *Maths* of *Vaishnavas* and *Saiva* sects took the cause of education with a missionary zeal, disseminating spiritual knowledge among the masses.

With the advent of Buddhism in India, the system of education developed under the impress of new ideas which became a rival to Brahminical system, inspite of the fact, that it was deeply rooted in Hindu philosophy. Buddhism accorded no recognition to the *Vedas* and the *Brahmanas* and their questioned superiority. Under it, heirarchy and caste system both were censured and the portals of learning were open to all without any distinction of caste and creed and thus broke the monopoly of the twice born or the *Dvijas* in matters of education. In the early stage, Pali language was introduced as a medium of study but with the development of *Mahayanism*, the Sanskrit language was again re-introduced in the curriculum of studies. The Brahmins remained no more the preceptors and the duty of imparting education fell on to the *Bhikkus*. The centre of educational activities shifted from the *Gurukulas* to the monastries of the day.

The monastries or *Viharas* became not only the centres of Buddhist education, they exhibited one of the fundamental features of Buddhist religion for many centuries in India. A person had to renounce the world, giving up all of his materialistic desires before he could become a *Bhikku*, to lead a life in a *Vihara*. It was necessary for a minor to obtain the permission of his parents before he could seek admission to join the *Sangha* or the community of the *Bhikkus*. This monastic system of education provided opportunity for collective life and brotherhood. All inmates led a democratic way of life under a common discipline. There was no home comfort in the monastries and every monk was assigned a separate cell for the purpose of meditation and studies. These *Viharas* were self sufficient units having arrangements for the promotion of necessities of life within



its four-walls. There were many gradations and categories of *Bhikkus* who were given lodgings according to their ranks in separate quarters. In these monasteries not only the new recruits were taught, there were those who came to join the rank of the *Sanghas* and for other educational purposes. According to Hiuen Tsang, there were 5000 monasteries spread over the country in the seventh century A.D. when he visited India.

The teachers in the monasteries were the *Upadhyayas* and *Acharyas* who were persons with great knowledge and experiences of ten years and six years respectively, as monks to their credit. The ceremony called *Pabhajja*, was for the ordination of the new entrants at the age of eight years, while *Upasamapada* was another ceremony marking the full admittance to the rank of monks, when the students attained the age of twenty years. The new entrants were expected to show respects to their elders and superiors undergoing a course of manual labour, when they had to go out with begging bowls in hands from door to door. Each beginner had to go to a *Bhikku* of his own choice to have his education. He had to repeat this request three times in an humble way with folded hands and utter— '*I take refuge in Buddha. I take my refuge in Dharma and I take refuge in Sangha.*'

Thus, he had to spend at least ten years under the supervision and guidance of his *Bhikku* preceptor. The student had to study sacred texts and doctrines under an *Upadhyaya* and for his life and conduct he was answerable to the *Acharya*. The principal idea of education was to make a provision for the instruction of the beginners with the doctrines of Buddhism and also for the vigilance over their conduct in the monastery. Greater stress was given on the abolition of ignorance, which alone could lead a man to the path of *Moksha*, which was the ultimate ideal of Buddhism. The relation between the teacher and the taught remained always very cordial and intimate, as existed during the Brahminical period in the *Gurukulas*. The pupil was the servant of his teacher and had to clean the *Viharas* and performed many other manual labours. The pupil learnt from his teacher how to remain steadfast to his faith. Whenever there developed any differences between the two, the *Sangha* was the final authority to judge the dispute and give the verdict which was binding upon both of them. The pupil had to lead a very simple life, shaving off his hair and beard and put on yellow robes which was the accepted symbol of renunciation by the *Buddhist*.

I-Tsing, a Chinese traveller gave a vivid picture of the education

in India, during the period he visited the land. He said that the monasteries allowed admission to three classes of students. First, who became *Bhikkus*; secondly, those who read religious scriptures, without joining the order; thirdly, those who took interest in secular subjects without renunciation of worldly pleasures. There was no bar for anyone to change his order of life. It is found in ancient book that Bhartri Hari changed seven times from the life of a *Bhikku* to the worldly life and vice versa.

#### F. Education of Women.

The position of women in the *Rig Vedic* period was very high in society. A woman possessed authority, respect and dignity. She was a part and parcel of the intellectual life of the community as a whole. She had access to *Upanayana* ceremony, having equal opportunity and right to education. Her social status and independence were objects of envy of women of the later *Vedic* period. She suffered from no restriction upon the growth and development of her natural instincts. She took active part in all the performances of *Yajnas*, prayers and sacrifices with her husband. She was in the forefront in all walks of life and suffered from no social disabilities. She was equally free to make the choice of her husband at the time of marriage.

( The woman was generally taught by her father and brothers at home and she did not go to *Gurukulas*. She was not forced to marry early in life. She could have mastery over all the Vedic literatures and was even allowed to learn the art of warfare. ) In ancient time, the womenfolk towered high as great Vedic scholars. *Gargi Vachaknavi*, *Vadava*, *Pratitheyi*, *Sulabha* and *Maitreyi* were all great composers of the *Vedic* hymns. They offered oblations on the occasion of *Brahma Yajnas*. The womenfolk took active part in educational conferences and public debates on religious discourses. They were ideal mothers and companions. Their unique position which they occupied in the *Rig Vedic* period had no parallel in the history of the ancient world. In the great *Epic*, the *Ramayana*, it is mentioned that queen Kaushalya alone performed sacrifices on the occasion of the coronation of her son Rama. Tara prayed for the safety of her husband Vali, when he was out for a battle against his brother Sugriva. According to a ritual in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishada*, a person prays for the birth to him of a daughter who should be a *Pandita*. The *Kaushitaki Brahmana* tells of an Aryan lady, Pathyasvasti going to the North for study and obtaining the title of the *Vak* i.e. Saraswati the goddess of learning. Thus the *Rig Vedic* age has been rightly called the golden



age of women of India.

In Vedic India no man or woman could perform any religious rites until he or she became well equipped with the knowledge of sacred literature. So, woman had also a right to *Upanayana*, *Brahmacharya* and thereby to all spheres of education. There is a reference in the *Atharva-veda* that it was only through *Brahmacharya* that a woman was entitled to get the hand of a young and able-bodied husband. *Manu* included *Upanayana* as one of the *Sanskaras* necessary for girls. Although, girls generally studied in their homes, there was no bar against their joining *Gurukulas*. During those days co-education was not ruled out, and love marriage in *Gandharva Vivah* was very common in social life. But at one time of history, the *Upanayana* ceremony of the woman was abolished from society, resulting in the decline of woman education to a great extent.

India had the proud privilege of having produced great women scholars whose hymns and *mantras* were incorporated in the *Vedas*. The *Rig Veda* contained hymns of twenty seven women seers who left a great legacy behind them. These women scholars were called *brahmavadinis*, who led a purely religious and spiritual life. These immortal daughters of India were Ghosha, Godha, Urvashi, Vishwavara, Apala, Sikata, Nivandri, Saswati, Aditi and others whose glory towered high in the ancient history of India.

( There were two types of women students, *Brahmavadinis* and *Sadyavadhus*. The *Brahmavadinis* went through the initiation ceremony and had the right of studying sacred literature, performing sacrifices and even begged within the precincts of their homes. They remained spinster throughout their lives generally but some of them married after the completion of their education. ( The *Sadyavadhus* were married girls of sixteen and seventeen years. They studied the *Vedic mantras* for their prayers and sacrificial rituals, along with other lessons on music, dance and arts. ) They got training in all vocational and domestic duties and many of them took to teaching profession.

The woman of those days had training also in the art of warfare. *Vadhrimati* and *Vishpala* fought in a battle bravely and thus lost their limbs. The *Rig Veda* refers of a woman named *Mud-galini* who had the courage to drive her husband in a chariot to the battlefield inflicting a crushing defeat upon the enemies.

During the *Upanishadic* period Gargi was a towering personality in the field of philosophy who even threw a challenge against Yajnavalkya, in debate, who was one of the great scholars of that age. Sulbha was another woman of great renown, who was honoured by king Janaka of Videha. Women also entered the *Vanaprastha* life of a mendicant and spent their days in forests. It is reported that Satyabhama led such a life after the demise of Krishna. Gandhari became a legendary heroine in administrative affairs of the country during the ancient days.

The *Buddhist* and *Jaina* periods made no further progress in the field of education for the womenfolk. The *Svetambaras* gave free admission to women into the faith, while the *Digambras* were against this practice. The *Buddha* permitted women into order when *Mahaprajapati*, his aunt made such a request. There were many centres of nunneries but none became very famous educational centre and nothing could be heard of those institutions after fourth century A.D. There was less encouragement for education of women in *Buddhist* religion. Women were not given equal status with men by it and the nuns of that period were inferior to their monks. The admission of women to *Bhikshuni-Sangha*, the order of nuns provided to them avenues of culture and social service and ample opportunities of public life. Some Buddhist nuns distinguished by the prominent part they took in the work of early Buddhist Reformation. Those who entered the order were known as *Theris*.

In spite of all social hindrances, the intellectual plane of the womenfolk at the time of the supremacy of *Buddhism* in India, did not go down. That period also saw a good number of talented women who brought out many literary creations and thus leaving immortal fame behind their names. Wonderful psalms glorifying the *Buddha* and the *Buddhist* order were written by *Buddhist* sisters, many of them were unmarried young girls. Although the period suffered from many inhibitions against the progress of education for women, yet it did not lower the literary standard of the *Vedic* times.

But when the influences of the *Smritis* began to be felt in the society, there came a great set back and deterioration in the position of women in the social set up. Women were forbidden to perform the *Upanayan* ceremony and education began to be denied to them



owing to the innumerable prejudices that crept in society against them. The study of the *Vedas* generally required long period, but the lowering of the age of the girls for marriages took them away from *Vedic* knowledge. Social prohibitions developed against women's participation in any rituals and sacrifices and they were even forbidden to recite *Vedic* hymns and *mantras*. According to Yajnavalkya and Yama, the parents were to arrange for the marriage of their daughters before the attainment of their puberty. Those who violated this rule were censured by the society. Thus, the system of early marriage for the girls had a great effect in retarding the cause of women education. Yet women continued to contribute to the art and literature of the country. Hala edited *Gatha-Sapta-Sati*, in which he included works of seven reputed poetesses of the day who exhibited much skill in their poetic art.

### G. Centres of Learning

In ancient India education was imparted to individuals in the *Gurukulas*. This development of *Gurukula* system was a great landmark in the history of education of India. The whole country was abounded with *Gurukulas*, where supervision by preceptors was direct and personal, and as a result each pupil left the institution after becoming great scholar and a worthy son of ancient India, of whom she was highly proud of for many generations. In addition to these *Gurukulas*, there grew many institutions of great learning at different places under the patronage of the kings. The ancient capitals were the centres of education and culture, where people flocked in great numbers for their education and pilgrimage. The visitors made offerings to the learned Brahmins who ran *Gurukulas* and other educational institution for teaching *Brahmacharya*. These voluntary contributions gave much encouragement to the cause of learning. Villages had also educational centres called *Agrahara* run through the munificence of the kings and princes. Many *Maths* were established by different *Acharyas* who were devotees to the Goddess of Learning throughout their life.

This system of education was not the outcome of the efforts of the government of the day, and it was developed and maintained by the charities of the philanthropists who took pleasure in offering aid to those institutions in cash or kind, as an act of virtue. These places became great centres of learning where scholars of repute came as individuals to learn and teach both. One of these places was Taxila the exact period of its foundation is not known to historians. But its glory reached its peak during the later *Vedic* period. It is said

that it was established by king Bharata in memory of his son and it was extinct before the visit of Fa-Hien to India. Although being situated in the North West of India, through which hordes of invaders passed while coming and going into the land, Taxila always remained as centre of education, constantly suffering from political and social upheavals. In the 6th century B.C. the *Brahmi* script was changed into *Kharosti* by the Persians when they occupied that place. After them, came the Greeks and they introduced their literature and philosophy in the curriculum. The university of Taxila produced many scholars who came from far away parts of the land. It was not a university of modern conception and system. No big halls or lecture rooms were found in the ruins. There was no organised system of education and principally it was of a domestic type. Here, great scholars always found patronage and each teacher accepted at least twenty students at a time to guide them. Students came from great distances of hundreds of miles on foot to quench their thirst for knowledge. Many subjects including military science were taught there. The poor students who could not pay their *Guru's* dues, had to serve the teacher by manual labour. Most of the scholars of ancient India were stated to have studied at Taxila. King Prasenajit, Prince Jiwaka, son of Bimbisara, Panini, and Kautilya were stated to have taken their education in that University.

There has been no mention in the *Vedas* of Varanasi as a centre of education in ancient India. The reason could be traced to the fact that the *Vedas* were all compiled before the entry of the Aryans into the Gangetic plains. It was during the *Upanishadic* period that Varanasi flourished as a centre of great learning, when the Aryans fully established themselves in that region. It has been said that the centre of Varanasi had been developed by the efforts of those scholars who returned back from Taxila after the completion of their learning. They established schools for spreading of education. Their efforts were furthered by the encouragement they received from the pilgrims of Varanasi who donated large sums of money for the maintenance of these schools. Varanasi had a great advantage owing to its situation on the bank of the Ganges for communication and transport.

Schools for higher learning cropped up all over Varanasi before the *Buddha* came there and it became a famous place of the *Aryan* culture and civilisation. Preachers of different religions flocked there to participate in the controversies on philosophical subjects and



religious treatises. The *Vedanta* and other speculative philosophies unfolding the ties of knowledge were the subjects of special interest during those days and the class of Brahmins was in this profession in individual capacities. Varanasi developed greatly in stature, where all the great sons of India of ancient times, viz. the Buddha, Shankara, Chaitanya, Nanak, Tulsi, Kabir and others visited through the generations. The *Buddha* selected Sarnath, a place in the suburb of Varanasi for building a centre for the propagation of his faith. According to many writers, Varanasi was more pronounced in religious matters than intellectual ones. But Alberuni called it one of the most noteworthy places of learning in the eleventh century A.D. Bernier who visited India in the 17th century gave a characteristic description of Varanasi in so many words. He said that the town of Varanasi was in general a school and it was the Athens of the gentry of the Indies, where the Brahmins and religion came together. They had no colleges or classes and it was more after the way of the ancients; the masters being dispersed over the town in their homes and specially in the gardens of the suburbs. Of these masters some had four disciples, others had even more and the most famous one had twelve or fifteen at most, who spent ten or twelve years with them. They studied leisurely and without much tormenting themselves, eating their *kichery* or mixture of legums which rich merchants sent to them.'

Mithila was another place of attraction for scholars in ancient India. It was here that king Janaka invited the great scholars of his days in debates to solve the complicated philosophical problems of life. It is said that here in the court of Janaka, Yajnavalkya once got a prize of many lakhs of rupees defeating his adversaries in debates. It continued as a centre of learning for centuries upto the time of the Mughals.

Kanchi was the capital of the Pallava kings in Southern India where under the royal patronage, the place became a centre of learning and was called the southern Varanasi. The place attracted scholars from far and near, contributed considerably to the production of literary and political thinkers of the day. Kautilya is said to have spent his educational career here. The teaching of *Buddhist* scriptures was a special feature of Kanchi, which had been mentioned by Hiuen Tsang who visited the place while in India. He described that at least one thousand priests lived in hundred *Sangharamas* at that time whose sole purpose was the pursuit of knowledge and spreading of education.

The Buddhist centres of education were monastical. The rest-

houses of the Buddhist monks grew into new colonies drawing many new comers into the order. The permanent buildings needed monks to look after them. The elder monks bearing more knowledge of the faith taught the new comers. Gradually the ranks of the monks swelled and more monastries grew up. These *Viharas* meant primarily for the meditation of the monks and in course of the time those turned to be powerful centres of education. The most celebrated one was Nalanda, which was situated at a distance of seven miles from Rajgriha. It had been a religious centre at the time of advent of the *Buddha*. Being the birth place of great Sariputta, it fell to the notice of king Asoke, who visited the place on a pilgrimage and built a *Vihara* in memory of the great saint. Another story says that Nalanda had one very big mango park, which had been purchased by five hundred merchants paying ten crores of gold *Mohars* and given to the *Buddha* as present, thus making it a place of sanctity for the *Buddhists*. The *Mahayanists* also took much interest to build up here many new monastries in the course of centuries making it a centre of great attraction for the people of the Buddhist order. Nagarjuna and later his pupil Arya Bhatta graced the town by their presence.

Education was imparted at Nalanda but it did not attain prominence. Fa-hien visited this place in the fifth century A. D. and he was not at all impressed by the educational progress done here. In fact, Nalanda became a great centre of learning during the Gupta rule in India. Under their patronage and financial assistance a university began to function here in 450 A. D., when Kumar Gupta built a monastery and made arrangement for education. This noble mission was carried further by his numerous successors and by the great Harshabardhan, the last ruling monarch of Hindu India.

Hiuen T-sang had spent full five years and learned Sanskrit in this sanctuary of knowledge, when it was a full fledged university blooming with glory at its height. At that time Silabhadra was the most venerable scholar there. It was under his guidance that Hiuen T-sang read and became a scholar of Indian philosophy. During those days scholars from different parts of the country gathered there, as that centre imparted education both in religious and secular subjects. It has been said that at that time, nearly ten thousand teachers and students were attached to that great university in their search for truth and knowledge. Many scholars of that period compiled treatises on Buddhist philosophy. The prominent among them were Dinnaga in the fifth century A. D., Sthiramati in the beginning of the sixth century



and Dharmapala in the seventh century. Many foreign students also lived there studying Indian philosophy and religion.

Nalanda in ruins, today, exhibits a testimony of its being a cultural and educational centre of ancient India. It was spread over an area of one mile long and half a mile breadth. It had three hundred buildings and eight big halls. The university campus was surrounded by a wall with only one main gate for entrance and exit. *Samgharama* was the main building having eight big halls and three hundred class rooms. From the architectural point of view, Nalanda was grand and magnificent. Its sculpture was fine and beautiful. All the towers, pavilions and domes of the town were of magnificent beauty. The flowing streams nearby, had plenty of lilies and the green groves added to the beauty of the atmosphere, keeping it cool and fresh. The *stupas* and temples in the western and the monastries in the eastern part of the town were constructed according to a planned manner and it was not of a haphazard growth.

The education imparted at the university was both religious and secular. To attain distinction in *Buddhism* and superiority in the intellectual domain were the aim of those who studied there. Both *Mahayanism* and *Hinayanism* were studied along with the sacred literature of the Hindus and Jains. Occasional debates were organised and Logic was a very important subject in the curriculum. Astrology was one of the scientific subjects which made great head way in those days. Writing was in vogue during that period but the method of teaching was practically the same that existed in the past. Great stress was laid on the development of the personality of the student who had to spend at least twelve years there for his education.

The university was a residential one, where board and lodging for every student was free. Each student was provided with a cot made of stone and a separate room, the allotment of which was made on the basis of merit. Each monastery was self-sufficient in matters of necessities of life, including drinking water. The standard of education was very high. Nalanda was a torch bearer of education and fountain of learning in the East, when the West was in complete darkness. It had a big Library, being the most important attraction of the university. It had three departments in three buildings known as *Ratnadadhi* (sea of jewels), *Ratnasagara* (Ocean of jewels) and *Ratnaraja* (jewel adorned). There were ample provisions of research works as the Library was rich with books and manuscripts. The Librarian had the same status as that of a teacher. Scholars

came there and spent their lives in the Library studying and making copies of religious scriptures. When the Muslim invaders destroyed the Library, the scholars all took shelter in Tibet, taking along whatever books and manuscripts they could. That was the reason why Tibet became enriched with the *Buddhist* literature in course of time.

Vallabhi was the capital of the Maitraka kings in Kathiawar who came to prominence in India during 475 A. D. to 775 A. D. It was formerly a commercial centre situated on the sea coast inhabited by rich people engaged in international trade. Later, it developed into a centre of learning under the patronage of the royal family and the merchant class. It became a place of attraction for students from the remotest parts of the country. In course of time, its reputation surpassed even that of Varanasi and Nalanda. It had a large number of *Viharas* and manastries where Arthasastra, Law, Politics and Medicine were taught to students with great emphasis to make them equipped with running the administration of the country. *Hinayanism* was the special subject patronised by the university. The names of those scholars who won distinction were kept inscribed on the walls of the institution's gate. Its importance in the educational life of India has been confirmed by *Hiuen-Tsang* and *I-Tsing* when they visited India. It is said that Sthiramati and Gunmati of Nalanda fame joined this institution and led it to attain its peak position.

King Dharmapala of Pala dynasty laid the foundation of Vikramsila, twenty four miles away from Bhagalpur near Nalanda, in the north of Magadha, by building a temple and monastries with halls, in the eighth century A.D. In course of time it developed into a great University. The campus was surrounded by a stone wall with six gates leading to six different colleges. (The Mahabodhi Temple of that place had 108 other temples erected around it.) A learned professor was appointed to look after each gate and it was his responsibility for admission of students in the particular college. Dr. R. K. Mookerji mentions the names of the *Dwara Pandits* as follows:—

1. *Ratnakarakirti*, East Gate.
2. *Vagisvarakirti* of Varanasi, West Gate.
3. *Naropa*, North Gate.
4. *Prajnakaramati*, South Gate.
5. *Ratnavajra* of Kashmir, First Central Gate.
6. *Jnanasrimitra* of Gada, Second Gate.

Vikramsila received more students from foreign lands than



Nalanda. Nearly one hundred and eight *Pandits* were engaged in the teaching profession. The university is said to have been honoured by eighty four *Siddhas* from 765 to 1200 A. D. It had the glory of producing great scholars including Dipankara who went to Tibet and founded Lamaism there.

Both Brahminism and the Buddhism were in the teaching curriculum of this university. Special stress was laid on the study of *Mahayanism*. The secular literatures were also taught along with religious subjects. The Library of the university was very rich with manuscripts and books of rare origin. Silabhadra, the renowned scholar of ancient time was associated with this university's administration and teaching tasks. The universities of Nalanda and Vikramsila were managed by a joint Board with Dharampala as patron. Teachers of repute taught in both the institutions.

Odantipuri, in Bihar, became a centre of education in the eighth century A. D. where Gopala founded a university whose fame went beyond the frontiers of India. It got the patronage of the Pala kings where thousands of scholars studied the *Buddhist* faith. Its construction was magnificently done and many Tibetans visited the palace were attracted by its beauty. It is said that the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet was built on his model.

During the coming centuries, many other centres of education developed in the country with the passage of time which kept the heritage of the ancient seers and saints who were the early educationists of ancient India. Although India had passed through many vicissitudes in her long history of rise and downfall, yet it was the philosophy of the ancients which kept the lamp of her knowledge burning through the ages.

### SECTION III

## THE VEDIC LITERATURE

The history of the Indus Valley civilization lies buried deep into the crevices of the past and like 'the Cretan and other early culture of Hellas' went to oblivion perhaps through the hostility of more powerful conquerors. After that India manifested one of the most ancient civilizations of the world, whose cultural development has remained a wonder of all peoples of all times. The Aryan civilization in India was established long before the birth of Christ, when almost all parts of the world were in darkness. The origin of the Aryan race is still shrouded in mystery but it has been proved beyond doubt that originally they were pastoral people living in the open lap of nature and migrating from place to place. This living in the midst of Nature provided them with the background of their literary, social and political life. Their religion was principally based on Nature and its various aspects led to great literary activity in the form of hymns addressed to gods invoking their blessings. These hymns were later collected and compiled in the *Vedas* which the Aryans considered as the highest and the greatest truth. The *Vedic* hymns 'formed the conception of a Being who is the depository and the source of all powers and forces of nature, from whom nature with its manifold living creatures has emanated and by whom it is sustained and maintained.' So, in ancient India, the history of religion was the history of man. It was light, life soul and guide of all Aryans wishing 'to know something greater than ordinary religion' and unearth the 'secret mystery of the universe.'

The *Vedas* are four in number. viz. the *Rig Veda*. The *Sam Veda*, The *Yajur Veda*, The *Atharva Veda*. Each *Veda* had its *Brahmanas*, the *Aranyakas*, the *Upanishadas* and other literatures including *Vedangas*. The word *Veda* was derived from the Indo-European root *Vid*, meaning knowledge, and it was the basis of the religious faiths of the Aryans. These *Vedas* were of great merit of the divine truths revealed to the super consciousness of the *seers* and *rishis* of the past. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the hymns of the *Vedas* are the



creation of poets, the *Brahmanas* are the work of the priests and the *Upanishadas*, the result of the meditation of the philosophers.'

Of the *Vedas*, the most important is the *Rig Veda*, which consists of 1,028 hymns, mostly in praise of god. The *Sam Veda* consists of the verses of *Rig Veda* for recitation. The *Yajur Veda* is the prose passage recited by the priests performing manual labour. The *Atharva Veda* was of later origin, consisting mainly of magical formulas. During the period of *Rig Veda*, religion of the Aryans became absolutely ritualistic in form, giving birth to the priestly class who were in turn, divided into three sects, viz. *Hotri*, *Udgatri* and *Adhvarya*. The *Hotri* was supposed to be the chief priest who read sacrificial mantras, while the *Udgatri* recited hymns in praise of god. The *Adhvarya* performed the duties of inferior nature.

Each *Veda* had two distinct divisions, one called *Samhita* and the other *Brahmanas*. The *Samhitas* were hymns addressed to gods in prayer, invoking injunctions, praises, and reflections. The authors of them were the *rishis*, who had direct communion with God by their meditation for years. These hymns were known as *Samhitas* of divinely inspired origin. The *Brahmanas* were the commentaries and explanations, being the guide for the sacrificial rituals. It explained about the origin and object of the rites and their *mantras* and narrations. The *Kalpa Sūtra* fully dealt with the rites exhaustively, which had been propounded in the *Brahmanas*. The *Brahmanas* also provided a basis for the development of philosophical thought which culminated in the growth of the *Vedanta*. The *Vedic Samhita* and the *Brahmanas* were called *Sruti*, i.e., revealed knowledge. The *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishadas* were the mirror of the revolutionary spirit which dominated the minds of those thinkers who opposed the domination of the Brahmin class who usurped the monopoly of performing all religious rites of the society. The *Vedangas* and *Smritis* had also their roles in the religious life of the country and particularly in the field of literature they brought much effect.

It is said that the great sage *Vyasa* was the original compiler of the *Vedas*, which he taught to his disciples. In course of time the original texts got changed and thus led to the creation of the *Charanas*, i. e., schools offering different interpretations to those texts. There were many branches or *Sakhas* of each *Veda* and all of them had passed through many stages of interpretations. The whole literature came down through the memorisation of different generations. Thus different interpretations led to different rules of each *Sakha*.

Each rule was scrupulously followed and any deviation from it was condemned by the law givers.

The *Upa-Vedas* were also placed in the category of the Vedic literature. The *Ayur-Veda* is the *Upa-Veda* of the *Rig-Veda*, while the *Dhanur-Veda* is the *Upa-Veda* of the *Yajur-Veda*. The *Gandharva-Veda*, book on Music is attached to the *Sam-Veda*. The *Silpasastras* and *Arthasastras* are the *Upa-Vedas* of *Atharva-Veda*. All social, political and mechanical subjects have been dealt in them.

Nature was supreme in religion of the ancient Indians, so in literature too, it had its supremacy, because all ancient literature was based on religious subjects. Ancient Indian literature had two different stages, one of the *Vedic* and the other of the *Sanskrit* supremacy. The *Vedic* literature was not bound by any grammatical rules as compared to Sanskrit, which in later part became a great source literature. But it must be remembered that the whole ancient literature was the offshoot of the *Vedas*. D. S. sharma, in his 'Primer of Hinduism' writes : 'The *Veda* is the main source. It is the fountain head of all Indian culture. Its rituals and sacrifices lead to *Karma-mimansa*. Its *Upasanas* lead to *Bhakti* doctrine. Its philosophical speculations lead to *Vedanta*. Its metaphysical disquisitions lead to the logic of *Nyaya*. Its accounts of creation lead to *Sankhya*. Its description of religious ecstasy leads to *Yoga*. Its conception of the Cosmic law leads to the moral law of *Karma*. And its kings and rishis are the starting point of our *Itihasa* and *Puranas*. We may even say that its occasional protests against sacrifice lead to Buddhism and Jainism. Thus all our secondary scriptures namely the *Smritis*, *Itihasas*, the *Puranas*, the *Agamas* and the *Darsanas* only developed this or that aspect of the *Veda*.

#### A. The Rig Veda.

*Rig* means 'praises' and *Veda* denotes 'knowledge' The *Rig Vedic Samhita* is a collection of *mantras* composed by a large number of families spread over a period of centuries and thus causing a great variation in its style and merit. It has been considered the greatest of all the the sacred books of the Aryans and as such stands as the oldest document in possession of the whole human race. In it, all the divine truths have been collected and the task of preservation of each *Mandala* was entrusted different *rishis*.

The *Samhitas* speak of the religion of the Aryans is an unsophisticated age. The performances of *Yajna* for the appeasement of gods had a prominent place in religion. The *Rig Veda* was a religious anthology having *psalms* and *mantras* in praise of various forces of nature. It



consists of ten *Mandalas* out of which only six are stated to be original, bearing the real essence or kernel of *Rig Samhita*. Those are also hymns composed by many different seers. Every aspect of human life has been dealt in the *Samhitas*. About the *Rig Veda*, Dr. Radhakrishnan writes: 'No primitive race like Indo-Aryans has produced such a wonderful exposition of thought like the *Rig Veda* at such an early period of history. The process of god making in the factory of man's mind cannot be seen so clearly anywhere else as in the *Rig Veda*.'

The *Samhita* of the *Rig Veda* were meant to be sung by *Hotri*, a senior priest in the hierarchy, who were eligible for the performance of *Vedic* rites. The *Samhita* has been divided into *Ashtakas*, *Adhyayas*, *Vargas* and each *Varga* into *Suktas*. E.B. Cowell, commenting on the *Rig Veda* writes: 'The poetry is remarkable deficient in that simplicity and natural pathos or sublimity which we usually look for in the songs of an early period of civilization. The language and style of the most of the hymns are singularly artificial; and indeed it has been made a question whether some of them were even meant to be intelligible to their first audience without an oral explanation of the obscure constructions and startling ellipses with which they abound. But though it cannot claim a high place among the relics of the poetical genius of early times, the *Rig Veda* possesses an undying interest as the oldest monument of gentile thought; and we can undoubtedly trace there the first outlines of speculations of of conceptions which afterwards branched out in widely, different directions in the ancient world'. 'In there purity, austerity and power the *Vedic* hymns have appeared to me like fresh clear streams, gushing out of a rocky mountain writes A. C. Bose. To him the *Vedic* language is marked by extreme economy of expression. It is often compact to the extent of being cryptic, and one frequently feels that more is meant that meets the ear.

The *Rig Veda* was a great hymnology in praises of the personified forces of nature and had a great role in the evolution of religious consciousness of the Aryans in the earliest phases of history. It enjoined upon the worship of gods representing each aspect of nature. This was a religion of polytheism, meaning possession of belief in godly power in different forms. The Aryans prayed and invoked the blessings of these gods off and on for the success of their efforts in leading a purposeful life. Each god was treated as a sole god and the protector of the Aryan life. This idea of one god was deep rooted in the *Rig Veda*, but in the *Upanishads* and the *Vedanta* philosophy it got the fullest expression.

Thus, the individual phenomena of nature represented one divine

power, who influenced greatly the course of the human destiny. From this belief, the Sun, the Wind and the Fire were the chief gods. In addition, there was the idea to have the unity in a *Supreme Being*, who was called the *Brahman*, the *Absolute*.

Different writers have assigned different periods to the compilation of the Rig Veda. Both Eastern and Western scholars have gone a long way in speculating about its date, which ultimately led to nowhere in real sense. K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri in his 'Studies in Ramayana' assigns the composition of the *Rig Vedic* hymns to 10,000 to 8,000 B.C. B.G. Tilak opined the date to be 8,000 B.C. Jones fixes the date of compilation of the *Yajur Veda* to the twelfth century B.C. Winterniz says in his final conclusion of the discussion of the 'Age of the Rig Veda', 'It is a great service to science to confess our ignorance than to deceive ourselves and others by producing dates which are no dates.' The same has been the confusion in relation to the question of the venue where the *Rig Veda* was compiled. Some have suggested its venue to be the Punjab while others advocated that it was Iran, where it was compiled first. According to some Indian writers, it was on the banks of the Saraswati river in the district of Ambala, the Punjab, where the *Rig Veda* was first composed. This question too like the period of its composition cannot be guessed with certainty.

### B. The Sam Veda

The *Sam Samhita* was a collection of melodious *mantras* to be sung on the occasion of *Soma Yajna*. *Soma* was a juice drawn from a sacred plant which has not been identified so far. It was deified by the Aryans and given a special position in their religious celebrations. Principally, the *Rig Veda* is the source of it and a large number of its hymns have been re-arranged for the recitation by the *Udgatri* priests. Seventy eight hymns were added in it by the *Udgatris* themselves. The *Sam Samhita* contains 1549 verses, and it is a wonderful document, only second to the *Rig Veda*. The *Hotri* of the *Rig Vedic* priest, performed all the functions from the start to the end of religious ceremonies. With the passage of time, the rituals became very complicated and it was found difficult for one man to perform all the functions single handed. The priesthood got divided into *Hotri* and *Udgatri* and the *Adhvarya*. The *Udgatri* priests chanted the *Sam Veda* hymns in chorus at the time of the performances of the sacrifices and rituals, while the *Adhvarya* read the prose order of the *mantras* contained in the scriptures.



### C. The Yajur Veda

The *Yajur Veda* was a guide for the *Adhavarya* priest who had to perform certain functions at the time of the sacrificial rites. His duty was to chant *mantras* involving only invocations to gods. The *Yajur Veda* was also based on the *Rig Veda*, as was the case with the *Sam Veda*. The selections of *mantras* from the *Rig Veda* were added with some prose version in this *Veda*. This *Veda* had two parts, one was *Black Yajur Veda* and the other was *White Yajur Veda*. The *Black* one consisted of prose hymns and *mantras* in verse and was an older one than the *White Yajur Veda* contained prayers of ritualistic performances. Both the divisions were similar in contents. It is stated that this difference in the *Yajur Veda* cropped up as a result of a dispute between Vaisampayana and his pupil Yajnavalkya. The latter prayed to the Sun and got the monopoly of acquiring the knowledge that his *Guru* did not possess. These texts obtained were *Vajins* called after the horse *Vaja*, in whose guise the sun appeared before the devotee Yajnavalkya to grant the boon.

The *Yajur Veda* covered the ceremonies which were complicated and full of dreary repetitions with petty requests for a better life. These were beyond the understanding of the common man. This very fact was sufficient for the Brahmans to have dominance over other castes and monopolise all the ritualistic professions.

The *Hotri* performed the rites of the *Rig Veda*, the *Udgatri* of the *Sam Veda* and the *Adhavarya* of the *Yajur Veda*. The Brahmin knew all these functions over which he presided to observe that the functions are performed according to the rules of the *Vedas* without any deviation.

### D. The Atharva Veda

The *Atharva Veda* is said to be more original than the *Sam* and the *Yajur Vedas*. It has six hundred verses out of which twelve hundred have been taken from the *Rig Samhita*. It is a book of great knowledge pertaining to all subjects, viz, arts, physical science, spell, magic and all other social sciences. There is also mention in it about curing of diseases by the use of herbs which was the first attempt in the world to treat medicine as a science. Astronomy is also an important subject dealt in it. The *Atharva Veda* is the development of the later period and has not been recognised to possess that degree of sanctity as enjoyed by the other three *Vedas* and their *Samhitas*.

The *Samhitas* attained their final shape after the contact of the Aryan culture and civilization with that of the Dravadians. The

Aryans accepted many aspects of the Dravidian life, such as magic, fear of evil spirits and ghosts etc. The Aryans incorporated in their sacred literature a collection of *mantras* or spell to be sung for the warding off the evil spirits and keep the religious ceremony safe and clear of any untoward events and mishaps. Thus it contained much of witchcraft to have things by the spell of magical powers. The text of *Atharva Veda* is preserved in the *Saunaka* School even to day.

It can be safely concluded that the *Atharva Veda* was compiled when the Aryan culture was in harmonious process of integration with the Dravadians, who were their opponents. Although the Aryan civilization had reached the high pedestal of chivalry and fearlessness, yet it assimilated some of the degrading traits of the subdued people. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the religion of the *Atharva Veda* is an amalgam of Aryan and non-Aryan ideals. The *Atharva Veda* gives us an idea of demonology, the primitive idea of shapeless ghosts and spirits of the death, while *Rig Veda* teaches us the worship of gods in a submissive and reverential manner without any fear complex. The followers of the *Atharva Veda* had to struggle a lot for its recognition as a *Veda*. But it has to be recognised that its highest contribution remains in the field of the development of sciences in India.

### E. The Brahmanas

The *Brahmanas* were hymns meant exclusively for the use of the Aryans at the time of rituals. They were a perfect guide for the Brahmin priests to perform their functions efficiently. The study of the *Vedas* became difficult and the *Vedic* hymns were not easily understood on account of their archaic language and obscurity of words and hence the *Brahmanas* flourished as a necessity. The compilers of *Brahmanas* had kept in view the ideas of speculation and mystification while preparing these new texts. It contained a large number of legends and explanation of *mantras* which were required on the occasion of various sacrifices and ceremonies. The origin of the *Brahmanas* was the creation of the individual sages who imparted knowledge orally to their disciples and who preserved them, through succeeding generations. This literature has been classified as *Sruti*, a knowledge contained through the ears of generations.

The *Aiteriya Brahmana* and *Kaushitaki Brahmana* are related to the *Rig Veda*. The former is a composite work of earlier period, while the latter possess much more rich contents. Eight *Brahmanas* have been mentioned to have connection with the *Sam Veda*, out of which *Jaiminiya Tandymaha Brahmanas* give a good picture of the social conditions of



those days. They also treat with sacrifices and the relationship of the *Soma* juice with them. The *Pancha Vimsa Brahmana* contains twenty five chapters with supplementary text. There are two recensions of *Satapatha Brahmana* of the *Yajur Veda*. The *Gopatha Brahmana* of *Atharva Veda* is of later growth after the schism that developed within the ranks of the followers of the *Yajur Veda*. It has a parallel in the growth of the *Srauta-Sutra* and *Grih-Sutra* of the *Atharva Veda*.

#### F. The Aranyakas.

For centuries the priestly class controlled the society and lives of the community, right from the birth of a person to his death. But there was brewing up a revolt against the practice of sacrifices and the costly rituals the performed as religious acts. The origin of the world and the reality of the gods came under the subject of speculation. The *Aranyakas* provided an answer to these questions. Old men, being unable to undergo the strains of performing sacrifices and other rites, took delight in meditating in jungles and studying the religious texts in calmness and solitude away, from the hustles and bustles of community life. Moreover the religious texts could not be read in the open because the *Brahmin* priests were against this practice. Thus grew the philosophy of the *Aranyakas* and it provided a substitute for rituals and that period was the interim period linking the gulf between the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishadic* philosophy. The social discontentment against the religious vagaries of the day brought an end to the monopoly of the Brahmins, giving birth to the *Upanishads*, which were the forerunners of the *Vedanta* philosophy. But the *Aranyakas* failed to make a sweep clean of the influences of the older philosophy. Yet, it must be admitted that the *Aranyakas* brought a great awakening in the society and thus developing the faculty of questioning things without taking everything for granted.

So, as time passed on new treatises on philosophy were current in the society which had no relation with the *Brahmanas*. These were called the *Upanishads* which brought a tremendous influence upon the life and activities of the Aryan people.

#### G. The Upanishads

The word has been derived from *Upa* (near), *ni* (down) and *sad* (to sit), i.e., to sit down near. The term *Upanishads* literally means to have a lesson sitting at the feet of a master, who imparts esoteric doctrines to his pupil. According to some, the etymological meaning of the word *Upanishad* is knowledge, through *Vidya* received from a competent teacher. This *Vidya* makes the soul free from the worldly bondage, destroying ignorance and enabling one to attain that stature

of knowing his self. It leads one nearer to that *Infinite* which is the summum bonum of all existence in the *Universe*.

These *Upanishads* were philosophical treatises which advocated views against the old *Vedic* sacrifices and ritualistic activities. It refused to honour the *Vedic* gods and goddesses. It began to see things with a spirit of enquiry, of mental adventure, of passion to find out the real truth about matter and life. Although, its search for the truth was not by the objective methods of modern science, yet there was an element of the scientific method in its approach, without any orthodox bias. The emphasis was mainly on self realisation, on knowledge of the individual self and of the *Absolute*.

The *Upanishads* were the foundation, on which most of the later day philosophies and religious ideas developed. It was the outcome of philosophical reasoning, which took nothing for granted. It dealt with the problem of the mystery of creation, the worship of deities and the utility of sacrifices, etc, thoroughly. The personality cult of the *Vedic* Brahmins and the priestly dominance were shattered under the fire of its criticism. This new philosophy brought a distinct division between the Brahmins and the class of philosophers. The philosophers took to meditation in the forests far away from the materialistic world, while the Brahmins began to be more and more orthodox in their rigidity of following the practices of religious ceremonies. The philosophers of the day led mighty intellectual revolution, which shook the very fabrics of the Brahminical civilization, culminating in compilation of the *Upanishads*. It broke the shackles of Brahminism on community as a whole bringing a new light of knowledge and opening the portals of unalloyed wisdom. It brought a great change in the general outlook of life and living and speculation on the mystery of nature was the absorbing thought which later came to be known as the *Vedanta*, i.e., the end of the period of the *Vedas*.

As a result of this new awakening, a number of disbelievers grew up in the society. They began to question the very existence of gods and of superior authority. The *Upanishads* gave new philosophical interpretation and explanation of the *Vedic* rituals. It discussed about the creation of the universe, the relation between the soul of man and God and the mysticism that enwraps every object of the universe. This philosophy gained popularity with the ascetics of the day who took to and the path of self immolation. The intellectuals attempted to solve the mysteries of the trans-migration of soul and of other cosmic phenomena. They were for more and more knowledge, which according to them was the means of salvation from this worldly bondage. This advancement of



the philosophic speculations provided the basis of the rise of *Buddhism* and *Jainism* in India during the coming generations.

The first effect of the influence of the new doctrine was a reaction against the Brahminical sacrificial worship and the removal of the distinction between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas in society. The Kshatriyas exerted a greater influence during the *Upanishadic* period on matters of philosophy and religion. Janaka Videha, Pravahana Jaivali, Sanat Kumar and others were among the many learned persons within the Kshatriya caste. It is said that during that period even the Brahmins, the masters of all sacrificial ceremonies of the *Vedic* days, took lessons from the Kshatriyas about the mysteries of rebirth, and about the identity of the soul with the *Brahman* and the *Infinite*, "Brahman, is supreme, he is self-luminous, he is beyond all thought, Subtler than the subtlest is he, farther than the farthest nearer than the nearest. He resides in the shrine of the heart of every being."

The *Upanishads* constituted a world of higher knowledge. When Schopenhauer read the Latin translation of them, he said, "In the whole world, there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads*. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death. They are as old as Homer and as modern as Kant." Writing about the *Upanishads*, Dr. Radhakrishnan writes: 'Though the *Upanishads* do not work out a logically coherent system of metaphysics, they give us a few fundamental doctrines which stand out as the essential teaching of the early determinative *Upanishads*. They describe to us the life of the spirit the same yesterday, today and for ever. But our apprehensions of the life of the spirit, the symbols by which we express it, change with time.'

Some Western philosophers complained that the *Upanishads* depicted conflicting doctrines. It has to be admitted that while the early protagonists of the *Upanishadic* philosophy were vehemently against the ritualistic sacrifices and worship of gods but in later period there developed a tendency for accommodating those early practices.

Whatever may be the views of the Eastern or Western philosophers about the continued flow of thought and the contradictions in the *Upanishads*, it is an undeniable fact that the *Upanishads* were the fountain of the culmination of the ancient *Vedic* knowledge of the Aryans. Principally in *Upanishads*, the Aryans entered into the subjective phase of their religion. R.D. Ranade writing about the development of this philosophy, says, 'In passing from the *Vedas* to the *Upanishads*, we pass from prayer to philosophy, from philosophy to reflection from henotheistic polytheism to monotheistic mysticism,'

There are one hundred and eight *Upanishads*. The *Aitareya* and *Kaushitaki Upanishads* belong to the *Rig Veda*; the *Chhandogya* and *Kena* to the *Sam Veda*; the *Taittiriya*, *Mahanarayana*, *Katha*, *Svetasvatara* and *Maitrayani* to the *Black Yajur Veda*; the *Isa* and the *Brihadaranyaka* to the *White Yajur Veda*; the *Mukunda*, *Prasena* and *Mandukya* to the *Atharva Veda*. The *Upanishads* of non-Vedic character are those dealing with *Yoga*, *Vedanta*, asceticism, and glorifications of *Vishnu*, *Shiva* and *Saktas* etc.

### H. The Vedangas

While the *Upanishads* bridged the gulf between the *Vedas* and later philosophies, the *Vedangas* tried to ensure the correctness and avoid the misinterpretations of the *Vedas* had other allied literature. The *Vedangas* were the limbs of the *Vedas* and were also known for having helped the growth of the scientific and non-scientific subjects. It dealt with matters mostly secular. The *Vedangas* were six in numbers, viz, *Siksha*, *Kalpa*, *Vyakaran*, *Nirukta*, *Chandas* and *Jyotisha*. Great literary persons like Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali are said to be pioneers in the *Sutra* field. Kautiliya, a great political thinker dealt with social system of the age extensively. His *Arthashastra* was a marvellous book on political and economic theories which has been admired by the scholarly persons of all ages. Panini was a great grammarian and he touched the science of phonetics and correct pronunciation of sacred literature in *Siksha* and *Taittiriya Aranyakaka*. He further explained in his treatises the history and development of letter that came down from the *Vedic* ages.

The *Pratisakhya*s were another type of literature of the early period attached to every *Veda* or its recension. The authorship of the *Rig Veda Pratisakhya* is ascribed to Saunaka, who prepared a list of *mantras* and their authors along with deities for whom they were meant. *Taittiriya Pratisakhya Sutra* of Katyayana and the *Atharva Veda Pratisakhya* belonged to Saunaka school. The *Panchvidha Sutra* and *Pushpa-sutra* were allied to *Sam Veda*. The great seers like Varadivaja, Vyasa, Vaisishtha and Yajnavalkya wrote many commentaries on those treatises.

The *Kalpa* literature covered the performance of ceremonies religious and secular both. Those were the codes of rituals of the complicated sacred scriptures. The teachings of *Brahmanas* were insufficient to enable the priest class to carry out religious functions efficiently. Hence, the *Kalpa Sutras* were indispensable for them to understand the *Vedas* and *Brahmanas*. The *Kalpa Vedanga* is called *Parisistha*, elaborating and supplementing the *Kalpa Sutras*. The *Paryoga* deals with



religious ceremonies and duties which the priests performed. *Padddhatis* were the guide to the subjects and were of supplementary character. The Kalpas have been explained extensively in *Sutra* literature of *Srauta*, *Griha* and *Dharma Sutras*. They all were for the purpose of regulating human life in general, although the three *Sutras* became independent of one another. *Sulvasutra* was also a part of the *Kalpa Sutras*. To understand the *Vedic Samhitas* and the *Brahmanas*, the *Kalpa Sutras* were essential.

The *Epic* period saw the growth of a mass of *Sutra* literature. The then existing literature became too scholarly and could not be within the comprehension of common people. Those were on the process of extinction. So to preserve and bring it up within the grasp of all, the ancient philosophical truths were edited and compiled in a compressed form. The *Sutra* forms of literature was the result of criticism in the age of reason. The *Upanishadic* philosophy was the result of the antagonism against the Brahminical forms of worship and so the Brahmins finding their prestige at stake summerised the whole literature in the form of *Sutras* in a compact form.

Thus the *Sutra* literature was a revealed matter related to sacrifices, religion, customs and usages. In it a particular subject has been compressed providing a clue to some old sacred scriptures. The *Sutra* means a thread in its literary meaning and though short in form they were not ambiguous. These were divided into *Srauta*, *Griha*, *Dharma* and *Sulva*. The *Srauta Sutra*, *Griha Sutra* and *Dharma Sutra* combined together were called *Kalpa Sutra*. *Sulva* was also a part of the *Kalpa*.

The compilation of the *Sutra* literature took many centuries. In them, the whole cultural and social life of the community was depicted comprehensively. Dr. Ram Gopal writing about the character of the *Sutras* says, 'The procession of Indian culture from the earliest times to the age of *Sutras* can be properly studied in different branches of the *Sutras* as they grew in course of time from their simple beginnings in an unwritten form to a highly developed form of literature in the *Sutras*.'

The *Srauta Sutras* based on *Sruti* deal with the Brahminical sacrificial rituals. They served as a guide to the presiding priests in the performance of *Vedic* rites. These are said to have closer relation with the *Vedas* than *Griha Sutras*. The sacrificial rites have been explained in prophetic language. Their compilation was a marvellous and scholarly achievement of the learned Brahmins, who made an attempt to bring the sacred scriptures within the purview of the people who failed to understand the *Vedic* hymns in original. As a matter of

fact, the *Srauta Sutra* narrated the religious history of the time. The subject treated in them were the *Brahmanas* and the *Aranyakas* and made them simplified.

The *Rig Veda* contains two *Srauta Sutras*, viz *Asvalyana* and *Sankhayana*, about the duties of the chief priests. The *Sam Veda* has *Latyayana* and *Drahyayana*. The *Black Yajur Veda* has comprehensive works about the prevalent religion by Apastamba Budhayana. Of it Budhayana was considered to be the oldest one.

The *Griha Sutras* contain rules for domestic ceremonies. They were compiled as a guide covering a wide field related to the whole life of a householder, right from one's birth to funeral. There is a vivid description of domestic customs and usages; in a word, the whole life of a man has been compressed in a nutshell. The conception of the child, the birth, the *Namakaran*, *Moondan*, *Upanayana*, *Samvaratna*, the marriage and the funeral ceremonies, have been dealt in details.

#### *Rig Vedic Griha Sutras*

1. The Sankhayana Griha Sutras
2. The Asvalayan Griha Sutras
3. Kaushitaka Griha Sutras
4. The Saunaka Griha Sutras
5. The Gharaviya Griha Sutras
6. The Paingi Griha Sutras
7. The Parashra Griha Sutras

#### *Sam Vedic Griha Sutras*

1. The Gobhila Griha Sutras
2. The Jaimini Griha Sutras
3. The Khadira Griha Sutras
4. The Gautama Griha Sutras
5. The Chhandogya Griha Sutras

#### *White Yajur Veda Griha Sutras*

1. The Parashra Griha Sutras
2. The Baijavapa Griha Sutras

#### *Black Yajur Veda Griha Sutras*

1. The Baudhyana Griha Sutras
2. The Bharadvaja Griha Sutras
3. The Apastampa Griha Sutras
4. The Hiranyakeshi Griha Sutras
5. The Vaikhanasa Griha Sutras
6. The Agnivesya Griha Sutras
7. The Manava Griha Sutras



8. The Kathaka Griha Sutras
9. The Varaha Griha Sutras

### *Atharva Veda Griha Sutas*

1. The Kuvshika Sutras.

The *Griha Sutras* emanated from the *Srauta Sutras*. Their period of codification coincides with the period when the integration of the Aryans with the non-Aryans took place. The *Griha Sutras* represented the ideas of the Aryans about their families and their functions in life.

The *Dharma Sutras* were the earliest record of the sources of the Aryan Laws. Set rules were formulated about man and his neighbours, man and the state, and his family and the society. The four ashrams in the life of a man have been given in details. In them were compressed ideas and conceptions of the Aryans and those were the basis of Dharamsastras and Arthsastras the science of politics and economics. In them was the description of Dharma, rights, duties and other laws based on religion, custom and convention. They were the fountains of justice and the guide to men in authority for the administration of laws of the country. They spoke of social customs, law and government, while *Griha Sutras* dealt simply with domestic life of the individual. It is said that the *Dharma Sutras* were compiled by Gautama, Vaisishta and Apastamba in the period between 600 and 400 B. C.

The *Sulva Sutras* was the last in the *Sutra* literature, closely related to *Srauta Sutras* and containing reference to the measurement and plans for the construction of *Yajna* altars. The *Sulva Sutra* means measuring string as basis for the development of mensuration and geometry. They were the foundation of the geometrical science of ancient India. The Western influence, specially that of the Greek is said to have played a prominent part in the composition of the *Sulva Sutras*. The practical utility in the performance of rituals developed this science of rules, which were strictly adhered to and any deviation was considered to be of calamitous end. The *Sulva Sutras* of Budhayana and Apastamba were compiled for the guidance of the builders of *Yajnasalas*.

The *Vyakarana* means grammar, for a systematic study and analysis of the language. It is a science which helps the construction and examination of sentences and words and their relation with one another in details. The ancient sacred literature was a product which

was absolutely carried through memory and thus led to some corruption into the texts. So, it was felt by the scholars to develop a distinguish the sacred scripts from non-*Vedic* texts. The most important work in that line was of *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini who discussed it in *Bhasa*, the language of the ancients.

According to Patanjali, 'Panini, the Dakshiputra, was an infallible authority who even excelled his predecessors.' Panini mentioned the names of sixty four scholars who wrote on this subject before him. His *Ashtadhyayi* a comprehensive work having eight chapters in thirty two sections, compiled by him in the 4th Century B. C., served as a real guide for the speakers, and scholars who wanted to further the cause of Sanskrit language in those days. Panini has been acclaimed as one of the greatest Grammarians of the ancient times. G. T. Garrat writing about *Ashtadhyays*, in his book, *Legacy of India*, says that Panini was one of the most signal triumphs of Indian intellect. His book gave precision to the mental life and it contributed greatly to the expansion of Indian culture through the methods of study and through translation of other literature into foreign tongues.'

Albrecht Weber, in his, 'History of Indian Literature', calls 'Panini, an architect of magnificent edifice, which justly commands the wonder and admiration of every one who enters it. Panini's Grammar is distinguished above all similar works of other countries, partly by its exhaustive investigation of the roots of the language and the formation of words; partly by its sharp precision of expression, which indicates with an enigmatical succinctness, whether forms come under the same or different rules.'

The thread of Panini's work was taken up by Katyayana, a critic of Panini. Patanjali a great scholar wrote *Mahabhashya*, a work much admired by the scholars of all times. Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* was the only text which could be placed in the *Vedanga* class of literature, and the great Grammarian is reported to have been inspired to bring out his creation by lord Shiva, one of the greatest gods of the Aryans.

Etymologically *Nirukta* is an explanation of *Vedic* literature which was difficult to comprehend. The old sacred books mostly were very scholarly and difficult to understand by the common people. The *Vedic Samhitas* required some guide to learn and understand them. The earliest attempt to interpret the *Vedic* passages was made by Yaska in 500 B. C., in his *Nirukta* classed in the *Vedanga* literature.



*Niruktas* contain certain words arranged without any idea of a sentence. These treatises contain three parts the *Nighantuka*, the *Naigama* and the *Daivata* and five *Adhyayas*. The lists of rare, difficult and obscure words were known as *Naighantas*. Yaska made elucidation of words which were difficult to understand in twelve books on the basis of works in existence at that time. His works contained the earliest *Vedic* legend in prose.

Pingalanaga treated *Chhandas*, i.e., metres and prosody of the early literature. He dealt with metres of the *Vedic* and non-Vedic books both. The *Nidana Sutrās* in ten *Prapathakas* refer to metres of the *Sam Veda*. There are various reference in the *Brahmans* about the question of metre and it has got a special treatment in a section of the *Sankhayana Srauta Sutra*. Those were classed as *Vedangas* but later have been accepted as late supplement dealing chiefly with post *Vedic* prosody of standard authority.

Jyotisha, the science of astronomy was a very important subject studied in ancient times. Its need was to find out the auspicious occasion to perform the religious and sacrificial rites. People well versed in that science could predict about the future events. The subject of Jyotisha was much developed during those days along with the science of Mathematical calculations but those were lost with the passage of time.

### I. The Epics

The *Epics*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were the vehicles carrying the message of heroism, composed during the period of the development of the *Upanishadic* philosophy. Both the *Epics* were secular in character shorn of the religious touches to a great extent. The *Epics* contained ballads of the scenes of the battles and other stories sung by minstrels and professional singers. Those songs and stories of secular character were collected and compiled and they became a great treasure of Aryan culture of civilization. These *Epics*—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* by Valmiki and Vasa respectively, spoke much of the early social, religious and political order of those days. Both the *Epics* mark a milestone on the literary progress of the country. They were not merely stories but were the histories of the heroic deeds of the king and warriors of the day, narrated in the fine poetical fancy. The main stories have been supplemented by a large number of similar legends in both the *Epics*. They are considered as the *Fifth Veda*.

The *Ramayana*, the *adi-Kavya* has been ascribed to the authorship of Valmiki, a contemporary of its heroes. The story must have been current for centuries before it assumed a religious character. It must have been

in the present from before the fifth century B. C. because it makes no mention of the *Buddha*, the founder of a new sect in India. It contains the story Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu and his wife Sita, in wonderful verses. It is the story of deification of love and faithfulness, in a beautiful work of art and its literature is an expression of the scholarly stature of its author. It graphically narrates the story of the spread of the Aryans in southern part of India. It was a saga of the religious, moral and political conditions of the day. The whole poetical composition stands as a masterpiece in the history of Indian literature. The *Ramayana* has served as an object of veneration and inspiration to the theologians and writers unaffected by the upheavals upto the present time. Like the *Epics* of other lands, it reflects the picture of the country of ancient days.

There are three different recensions of the *Ramayana* Northern Southern and Eastern, each containing certain verses which are not to be found in other editions. The *Ramayana*, like the other ancient sacred scriptures came through memory and that might have lead to differences in the recensions, while taken to writing. The first and last *kandas* are the later additions and those are quite different from the other five *Kandas*. The *Ramayana* is believed to have been of thousand pages of forty-eight lines each, in the beginning but in course of time, it began to become bigger in volume, from the third century B. C. onward, although the traditional view is that it was composed a million years ago.

The *Ramayana* represented India in its national and universal character. The poet took particular care in keeping the *Epic* in the field of secular thoughts and ideas. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, describes it as the greatest *Epic* poem of India, an incarnation of the Aryan spirit and the supreme shrine of the Aryan ideals, beating the real heart of *Eternal India*'. It has become the prosperity of the whole Indian people and no other poem in the entire literature of the world has influenced the thought and poetry of a country so much as it has done to India through the ages.

The *Mahabharata* tells the story of the civil war between the Kaurvas and the Pandavas, the great grandsons of king Shantnu, which took place in the plains of Kurukshetra in Northern India between the twentieth and tenth century B. C. The *Mahabharata* remained for centuries in the throats of the singers of ancient India, till Vyasa edited and compiled it along with other old scriptures. It is said that Vyasa dictated and Ganapa i took it down. Vyasa taught *Mahabharata* to his son Suka and to his other disciples. Narada told this story to Devas, Suka to the Gandharvas, the Rakshasas and the Yakshas, Vaisampayan



a disciple of Vyasa gave it to humanity at large when he narrated it to Janamejya.

The *Mahabharata* is said to be one of the longest poems written in ancient days. There are stories of kings and warriors unconnected with the main theme in this *Epic*. The *Harivamsa* contains the genealogical table to Hari and Krishna forming an appendix to the *Mahabharata*. It was composed keeping in view the religious and *Vedantic* sentiments. It begins as a brief poem of 8800 verses by Vyasa and given the name of Bharat by Vaishampayana, while Souti made *Mahabharata* of 18 Parvas. Every century brought new addition to it and thus it became a great one containing 107,000 Octometre couplets. Mr. R. C. Dutt characterised it in the following words :- Thus the growth continued for thousands of years until the Crystal rill of the *Epic* itself was all but lost in an unending morass of religious and didactic episodes, legends, tales and traditions.'

In the *Mahabharata* there is mention of the *Yavanas* which is not found in the *Ramayana*. The *Mahabharata* is a folk *Epic*, while the *Ramayana* is a *Kavya*, complete in form and finds a place in classical category. Both the *Epics* played an indispensable part in the lives of the Aryans and even persons who had no access to the *Vedas* and other Brahminical scriptures. According to Shankaracharya, *Mahabharata* was used as a text book for the teachings of the non-*Vedic* people.

The *Bhagwad-Gita* is a jewel studded in the pages of this great *Epic*. It covers all fields of knowledge, including religion, philosophy, social sciences and history of ancient India of the early Aryans. According to the *Mahabharata* there is no narration on earth that cannot be found in it. This *Epic* is heavier than all the four *Vedas* when their mystical writings are weighed. It is the creation of the various minds of the various epochs but compiled into a whole one. In it, the influences of religion and the Brahminical superiority have been maintained, with the cult of Lord Krishna as its chief theme. Although there are different recensions of the book, yet the unity has been maintained always by its successive editors.

The *Bhagwad-Gita* forms the crux of the *Mahabharata Epic*, in which Sanjaya narrates the discourse between Krishna and Arjuna when the forces of the Pandavas and the Kauravas faced each other in the battle field of Kurukshetra. Krishna gives advice to his devotee identifying himself with the *Supreme Being*. Arjuna faces a dilemma to fight against his own kith and kins. This agonising conflict of Arjuna's mind is resolved by Krishna who asks him to perform his duty

without yielding to emotional crisis because in rightful actions lie in the salvation of mortal beings.

The *Bhagwad Gita* contains eighteen chapter enunciating a comprehensive philosophy. It worked like the Bible among the Aryans of all ages and was considered next to the *Vedas*. It is the summery and compressed form of the *Upanishads*. Its kernal is ethics which emphasises on the performance of duties by men and women without fear or hatred. It conveys the message of devotion to the Almighty shorn of personal expectations and desires. It has remained as the most sacred text for the Aryans of all ages.

The theory of detachment from the fruits of action is the great paradox of the *Gita*. It belongs to the world's wealth of philosophical aphorism. The *Gita* is an attempt to synthesise the truth of *Upanishadic* philosophy written in immortal verses, conveying the teachings of the *Supreme Lord* for the benefit of mankind. It infused courage in the conflict-torn mind of Arjuna who took up arms and fought bravely the battles of victory of truth over falsehood and conceit. It has baffled the best of the minds and has been acclaimed with comments throughout the ages both in the East and the West. Farquhar calls it a divine song as the loveliest flower in the garden of Sanskrit literature. Jawaharlal Nehru says, "that it is a poem of crisis, of political and social, and even more so, of crisis in the spirit of man." Aldus Huxley writes about poem. 'The *Gita* is not primarily concerned with Krishna as an individual, but with his aspect as *Brahman*, the ultimate reality. 'It has been rightly said that' none has power to describe in words the glory of the *Gita*, for it is a book containing the highest esoteric doctrines.' It is the essence of the *Vedas*, its language is so sweet and simple that everyone can easily understand it after a little practice but the thoughts are so deep that none can comprehend it even after constant study throughout a life time.

Elphinstone describes *Bhagwad Gita* as a poetical exposition of the doctrines of a particular school of theology. It has been admired for the clearness and beauty of the language and illustrations. Whatever may be its merits as to clearness, it deserves high praise for the skill with which it is adapted to the original *Epic* and for the tenderness and elegance of the narrative by means of which it is introduced.

The *Gita* has shone like a bright star in the sky, inspiring other religions as well, since it has been written. All the scholars and philosophers of ancient India commended it, to be a guiding instrument for a balanced, pure and detached way of life,



### J. Six systems of Philosophy

While the *Upanishads* which elaborated the ideas of *Brahman* and knowledge of the *self*, *Moksha* became the basis of the development of *Vedanta* philosophy which was the crowning achievement of human thought. Vyasa has been the founder of this school of philosophy, who had to his credit the compilation of the *Vedas* and *Mahabharata* both, out of which *Vedanta* philosophy developed. In course of time two predominant thoughts led to the division of the society into two groups—one of *Astik* and the other of *Nastik*. Those who belonged to the *Nastik* school were the followers of Charvakas, the Buddhists and the Jains. They had no faith in the authority of the *Vedas*. The *Astik* school believed in the *Vedas* and considered them as sacred revealed truths. This controversy hoped to develop a critical sense among the people and as a result there grew six systems of philosophical thought in India. They were called *Vedanta*, i.e., the end of the *Vedas*. The *Vedanta* scriptures came out in *Sutra* style, in very simple form which even common people could understand. They took a long time to develop and flourish. According to Max Muller, the *Sutras* or *Aphorisms* which we possess of the six systems of philosophy, each distinct from the other, cannot possibly claim to represent the very first attempt at a systematic treatment; they are rather the last summing up of what had been growing up during many generations of isolated thinkers.

Whatever might be the process of their development, they are a representation of all ages and called, '*Parampara*', Elphinstone calls the six systems avowedly inconsistent with the religious doctrines of the Brahmins and even advancing opinions not stated in the *Vedas*. The system, atheistical, as well as theistical, agree in their object, which is to teach the means of obtaining beatitude, or in other words, exemption from all corporeal encumbrances. The object is to enable one to be free from the world of the senses, anxieties, passions, thereby prepare him for final state signifying eternal rest and unison with god'.

The *Upanishads* laid the fundamental principle that self was the ultimate Reality and the Indian philosophers modified the same to suit their own ideas. Thus the philosophy of the *Upanishads* is based on *Chhandogya*, *Konshihtaki*, *Varihad*, *Aranyaka*, *Auteriyaki*, *Taitterya*, *Katha*, *Manduka*, *Prasana*, *Sateshwara* and *Kena*; out of it grew the famous schools of philosophy as the *Nyaya*, the *Vaiseshika*, the *Sankhya*, the *Yoga*, the *Purva-Mimansa* and the *Vedanta* as a result of the thinking

of the architectonic builders of philosophy.

(a) *Nyaya* means an argument, a method of reaching to a conclusion. The *Nyaya Sutrās* have been ascribed to the authorship of Gautma, who is said to be the founder of this school of thought. The object of Gautma was the attainment of *Moksha*, i.e., salvation through philosophical enquiry into knowledge. The *Nyaya Sutrās* offer the means to attain knowledge through intuition, inference, comparison and verbal testimony. These *Sutrās* were composed before Asoke in the present form, consisting of five books dealing with logic, theory of knowledge and dialectics, psychology, rebirth and salvation. The philosophers find in them rules and principles for exposing controversial points of discussions. The *Nyaya Sutrās* sharpen the intellect enabling the person to think freely and soar high into the philosophical domain of the world of nature. Reasoning was so prominent with the followers of Gautma that the gods were relegated to the background.

It was mainly a school of logic which taught a system of syllogistic argument. The doctrine makes it clear that to achieve salvation logical thinking is essential. This system reached its prominence and became a popular subject of study owing to its merit and intrinsic value. This principle of reasoning and logic was very useful to the followers of other philosophy also. Gautma gave a systematic shape of this logic to his *Nyaya Sutrās*, in near about 500 B.C. It was commented upon by Pakshila-Svamin Vatsayana in his *Nyaya Bhasya*, modifying the original in 150 A.D. After that Uddyotokara Bharadvaja wrote *Nyaya Varttika*, a commentary on *Nyaya Sutra* and *Bhasya* in the sixth century A.D. Vachaspati Misra wrote *Nyaya Vyarttika Tatparya Tika*, in the ninth century. The *Nyaya Sutra* had another version in the *Nyaya Varttika Tatparya Parisuddhi*. The latter work proves the existence of God from the point of view of *Nyaya*. Other important treatises on the subject came out subsequently. The most important of them are *Nyaya Kusumanjali* by Udayanta, *Nyaya Manjari* by Jayanta, *Nyaya Sara* by Bhasar Vajna. In 1200 A.D. Gangesa laid the foundation of modern system of *Nyaya*.

Gautma's service has been acclaimed by the philosophers of all ages. Durant writing in his 'Story of Civilization' says about Gautma that his achievement was to give India an organ of investigation and thought with rich vocabulary of philosophical terms.

(b) The *Vaiseshika* system is the philosophy of atomism which is said to have been propounded by Kanada. Atoms were the basis of his



thinking. According to this school of thought, all things in this world are made of atoms which cannot be destroyed. It further says that the movements of the atoms in the void are not under the dictation of any godly deity and it is an invisible power, and the ultimate of all things. This doctrine has been named after the word, '*Visesa*' meaning the *Particular*. This doctrine is a dualistic one, treating matter and soul both. The salvation or *nirvana* is attained after realisation of differences between the two. It has dealt about the universe, nature and matter. The matter includes earth, water, air, fire and space. The soul when detached from matter can be free to find the *Reality*. The person who can understand nature and has deep knowledge about the distinction in the relationship of six *Padarthas* can reach his goal. The *Padarthas* have been classified by Kanada to the minutest detail, i.e, its substance, quality, movement, generality, particularity and inherence.

The *Vaiseshika Sutra* was the first to have been compiled as a secular work based on scientific ideas. The old work has gone through many changes in many hands and it could be seen from the Brahminical influence in their latest editions. The *Vaiseshika Sutra* had no commentary to a great extent. An independent work, though taken as a commentary on *Vaiseshika Sutra* is *Prasatarpada padartha—Dharma Sangraha* of fourth century A. D. *Prasastapada* found commentators in Vyomasiva, Sridhara and Udayana who wrote *Vyomavati*, *Nyaya Kandali* and *Kiranakali* respectively in medieval times. Udayana wrote *Lakshanvali* a guide covering the whole field of this philosophy.

In *Vaiseshik* logic became the means to analyse nature. The *Nyaya* is mainly logic, while the *Vaiseshika* deals with physics and metaphysics. There is similarity in some of the principles of the both. The true and perfect knowledge, living without attachment leads one to the path of liberation and attainment of beauty. The two systems submerged into each other and treated as a whole, in the *Nyaya Vaiseshika*. Its literature consists of commentaries and sub-commentaries. The *Sutras* of Gautama and Kanada provide the basic principles. Though it were brief, yet the later writers gave new interpretations of it. The *Nyaya* and *Vaiseshika*, in course of time, came under the fire of great scholars and as a result the adherents tried to bring in it some realism influencing the both be blended together as *Nyaya-Vaiseshika*.

(c) The *Sankhya* was a great stepping stone in the development of philosophical thoughts of India. Kapila was the traditional founder of this doctrine. This system was developed in the



period of *Upanishads* and contained some of their ideas in it. The *Nyaya-Sutra* and the *Brahma-Sutra* were the fundamental *Sutras* of *Sankhya*. The *Buddha* is said to have obtained education from Alara Kalama, a *Sankhya* teacher, according to Asvaghosha's *Buddha Charita*. In both the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagwad-Gita* are embedded the principles of *Sankhya* philosophy. Kapila compiled twenty five *Realities*, i.e., *Tattwas* in enumerated form. These *Tattwas* and their enumeration, according to Kapila made up the world. He was the first Indian thinker who believed in freedom of thought and rejected the theory of overcoming sufferings by physical means. Kapila believed in the *Vedas* as an authority but remained independent of them. He rejected the *Brahman* and the world soul. He made distinction between matter and plurality of souls contained in the universe.

The *Sankhya* can be interpreted in two ways; it pertains to the knowledge of wisdom philosophically and to numbers. Its basic principles are *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. The *Purusha* (soul) and *Prakriti* (matter) are independent of each other. The *Purusha* is regarded as pure spirit, inactive and unchanging. It is pure consciousness presiding over the minds of individuals. The *Prakriti* is the original substance of three *gunas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The *Prakriti* is unconscious, active and everchanging, being opposed in character to *Purusha*. The consciousness and unconsciousness are the two aspects of same one. Being and as separate entities both are unreal. The *Purusha* inspires the development of *Prakriti* and with its *gunas*. The contact of the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti* leads to creation. Why is there pain and suffering in the process of creation? It is owing to the inability on the part of the individuals to distinguish between the two. What is required is discriminative knowledge and the *Sankhya* explains the formation of the universe and the means to attain the ultimate *Reality*—the *Truth*.

The *Shashti-Tantra*, a book containing sixty chapters is reported to be written by Kapila, which is not extant. In fact, *Sankhya* also must have been the fruit of labour of the philosophers of many ages. But this system suffered the worst onslaughts from other doctrines. What escaped extinction is the oldest *Sankhya Karika* written by Isvarakrishna in about fourth century A.D. There grew up two schools out of *Sankhya* philosophy—the *Theistic* and the *Atheistic* schools. The latter has its advocacy in Isvarakrishna's book, while the former has been elaborated by Patanjali in *Yoga* doctrine. The most important commentary on *Sankhya Karika* is the *Sankhya Tattava Koumudi* of Vachaspati Misra which gave a good exposition of the evolution of the *Sankhya* Philosophy.



The origin of the *Sankhya* is shrouded in that period when Indian philosophical thought was in a process of taking its final shape. It can be safely said that the philosophy of *Sankhya* was pre-Buddhistic in origin and one time it played a very important role in the religion and culture of the ancient Indian people before it became eclipsed by the *Vedanta* philosophy.

(d) The *Yoga* literally means the yoking of the mind to spiritual discipline or union with the *supreme Being*. The *Yoga* doctrine is theistic in character unlike the *Sankhya*. In it the invisible power has been deified. The union with God is not the aim but to be free from influence of matter, the cause of all sufferings, has been emphasised more vigorously. Macdonell writes: 'The primary meaning is the 'yoking' of the mind with a view to concentrate thought on a single point; for these exercises aim at the regulation of breathing, sitting and restraining the senses for the purpose of exclusive concentration on a single supernatural object, in order to obtain supernatural power.'

Arthur Koestler writing about *Yoga* defines it as the ultimate absorption of the subject in its 'real self', in pure consciousness without object. When this is attained, individual consciousness merges into cosmic consciousness and the real self dissolves in the Universal self as sparks issued from the same fire as destined to return to it, or as dew drop, trembling on a lotus slips into the shining sea.'

The practice of *Yoga* existed among the *Vedic* Aryans who performed *Tapasya* and meditation to develop the faculty of having direct communion with the *Supreme Being*. These old practices and their methods were collected and compiled by one in the name of Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutra*. This Patanjali was not the same Patanjali, the grammarian of *Mahabhasya*. This doctrine enjoins the attainment of *Nirvana* or salvation by the atonement of past sins through suppression of diversified mental activities. By complete concentration and the renunciation from the materialistic world, the soul of a man reaches to that elevating position from where it shines from contentment. A man in agony needs the unity of his soul with the *Supreme Soul*. By practising *Yoga* one could be one with *Him* and could forget all the worries of this world. Patanjali outlined an eightfold path for suppressing all mental activities and thus making the *yama* to be desireless. *Niyama*, *Asana* *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharna*, *Dhyan* and *samadhi* etc, were the principle ones. In *samadhi* the mind loses its own and is blended completely into the reality and ultimately there is self illumination and then the soul

becomes the *Brahman*.

This *Yoga Sutra* by Patanjali was commented upon by many writers after him. The one notable comment was in *Yoga Bhasya* written in the fourth century A. D. Vachaspati and Vijnana Bhikshu wrote *Tattava Visaradi* and *Yoga Varttika* respectively. Another work was *Yogasara Samgraha*, which was found very useful. Bhoja also made a contribution by his commentary on *Yoga* in his *Rajamartanda*. This doctrine of *Yoga* found adherents among the compilers of later *Upanishads*, viz. *Maitri Sandilya*, *Dhyanabindu*, *Hansa* and others.

The basic philosophical principles of *Yoga* were drawn from the *Sankhya* with the addition of some personal contribution in it by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutra*. It can be called *Sankhya* in theistic form. Both the doctrines are woven together and generally the *Sankhya* and the *Yoga* are treated as of one philosophical system.

(e) *Purva-Mimansa* is a system laying much stress on the reality of the world and individual souls according to which performance of one's duty leads him to *Moksha*. This system speaks of the eternity of the *Vedas*, *Dharma* and *God*. It was an *Astik* philosophy. It was a protest against those who were *Nastik* and heretics and exposed the doctrines enunciated by them. It advocated the performance of rituals and other sacred duties as enjoined by the *Vedas* as essential religious acts. In it, greater emphasis has been laid on religion than philosophy. Knowledge is not considered as the means for attaining *Moksha*, because the human mind is very feeble to understand the complicated metaphysical problems. The *Uttar-Mimansa*, however, admits philosophy on the basis of *Dharma* and the performances of religious rites. It is both realistic and pluralistic. It stresses on the performance of obligatory needs and avoidance of those which have been prohibited.

Jaimini wrote *Purva-Mimansa Sutra* in 4th century B. C. in which he justified the *Vedas* and their practical side (*Karma-Kanda*). Sabarasvamin wrote a commentary on *Jaimini's Sutra* in 1st century B. C. Others important commentators of that period were Bodhyayana, Upavarsa, Bhavadasa, Bhartmitra and Bhartahari. In 7th century A. D. Kumari Bhatta brought out a commentary on Sabarasvamin's *Bhasya* in the books *Sloka-Varttika*, *Brhattika* and *Mahyama-Tika*. Kumarila led a school of thought which ultimately became an object of attack in the hands of the *Buddhists* who had no faith in the *Vedas*. His commentaries depicted a picture of the social and literary life of India. Prabhakara wrote commentaries *Brhati* and *Laghvi* on



*Sabara Bhasya* which were commented upon by his disciple Salikanatha in *Rju Vimala* and *Dipa Sikha*. Salikanatha was followed by the disciples of Kumarila in writing commentaries on the subject. Madan Misra wrote *Vidhi Viveka*, *Bhavana Viveka*, *Vibhrama-Viveka* and *Mimansanukramani*. Bhattomvoka commented on *Sloka-Varttika* and *Bhavan-Viveka*.

Salikanatha elucidated and made a good exposition of the doctrines of Prabhakara, his *Guru* famous *Prakarana-Panshika*. Vachaspati Misra wrote *Tattva-Bindu*, a compendium and *Nayaya-Kanika*, on *Vidhi-Viveka*, Deva Swamin wrote *Bhasya* on *Samkara Kanda*. Kumarila left a large number of commentators and elucidators who threw a flood of light on the system. The famous among them were Bhavanatha Misra, Bhattasomesvara, and Madhavacharya who wrote *Nyaya-Viveka*, *Nyaya-Sudha*, and *Nyaya Mala Vistara* respectively.

The *Purva-Mimansa* met with opposition from an other school of philosophy, the *Uttar-Mimansa* or the *Vedanta* which began to gain ground day by day. The *Purva* dealt with the practical part of the *Vedas* while the *Uttar* believed in knowledge as a road to *Moksha*. The *Purva-Mimansa* cannot thus be said to be taken as a philosophy because its object was simply to explain *Dharma* in the context of the *Vedas*, while *Vedanta* became the cream of Indian philosophy in course of time,

(f) The *Vedanta* means literally the end of the *Veda*. It gives an exposition of the practical part of it. That is why it was also called *Uttar-Mimansa*. The *Vedanta Sutras* have been called *Brahmasutra* the investigator of *Brahman*. It is also known as *Sarirka Sutras* on account of its embodiment of unconditional self. The *Vedanta* teaches in a systematic way the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, their logical structure and indispensable doctrines, the kernel of which is 'God and Soul' as one. Thus the *Vedanta Sutras* are the elaboration and explanation of doctrine set in the *Upanishads* which have been described as *Sruti*, the highest rung of *Vedic* literature. In it, there is an attempt to bring reconciliation between the *Brahman*, the individual soul and the world. It deals with the *Brahman* the ultimate *Reality*, considering the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti*, as a single whole. About the *Vedanta*, Max Mullar wrote, 'If philosophy is meant to be a preparation for a happy death as Euthanasia, I know of no better preparation for it, than the *Vedanta* philosophy. Goldstucker says 'the subject matter of *Vedanta* is the proof that the universe emanates in a successive development from a supreme spirit or soul, which is called *Brahman*, that the human soul is, therefore, identical in origin with *Brahman*, that the worldly existence of the human soul is merely the result of this sameness between itself and the supreme spirit; and its final liberation or freedom from transmigration is attained by a



removal of this ignorance, that is, by a proper understanding of the truth of the *Vedanta* doctrine.

The *Brahman* is the fountain out of which sprout the individual souls. It being in touch with the materialistic world, the individual soul fall into ignorance forgetting about its origin. The soul is immortal having an unbreakable relation with the *Brahman*, its source of emanation. The removal of this ignorance leads to the unity of the individual soul with that of the *Brahman*. The basic principle of this philosophy is that God is the omniscient and omnipotent cause of existence, continuance and dissolution of the universe. The *Almighty* is the sole existent, the universal and the supreme soul. The individual soul is immortal, infinite and originating from *God* like a spark coming out of flame of fires.

The *Brahma Sutras* of Badarayana or Vyasa formed the foundation of the thought of this school. These *Sutras* were not understood without the help of commentaries and these were different from the *Purva-Mimansa* which concerned with rituals only. These *Sutras* were commented upon by Gaudapada. His work seems to have been influenced by the *Buddhist* doctrines. His disciple Govinda taught it to Shankara who elaborated the elliptical text and brought out harmony in the *Upanishadic* philosophy eliminating many of its contradictions. Shankara was a Nambudri Brahmin from Malabar born in 788, was the chief of the *Vedanta* philosophers and the exponent of 'advaita' doctrine. He brought out distinction between *Para-Vidya* and *Apara-Vidya*. He wrote many commentaries on the *Upanishadas*, the *Bhagwad-Gita* and the *Vedanta Sutras*. He offered an interpretation to the doctrines of Badarayana in a scientific manner. Shankara further enunciated and elaborated a doctrine of *Maya* i.e., *illusion*. On acquiring of true knowledge, the illusion disappears and there remains no distinction between the soul and God-leading to *Moksha*, i.e., the attainment of *Brahman*. The *Brahman* is the cause and effect, the timeless and secret essence of the world. In course of time, Shankara became a powerful force in India who carried his doctrines throughout the country, thus eclipsing other philosophies prevailing during those days. He had a magnetic personality with unrivalled scholarship and criticism of other doctrines became so forceful that those philosophies could not thrive again in India till before his death. He wrote *Gitabhasya* or a commentary on the *Bhagwad-Gita* in which religion and philosophy had been combined. His another work was *Atmabodha* of sixty five stanzas with a commentary on the *Vedanta*.



Madhva, one of his followers wrote *Pancadasi*, clearly elucidating the *Vedanta*. The philosophy of Shankara got support from Mandana, Suresvara and Padampada of the eighth century, who wrote *Brahma Siddhi* and *Naiskarmya Siddhi*, *Brahadaranyaka Varittika*, *Taittiriya Varittika* and *Panca Padika*. Vachaspati Misra in ninth century wrote *Bhamati*, a commentary on the writings of Shankara, in which he commented on *Brahma Sutra* also. Sriharsa, a dialectician of the twelfth century A.D. was the author of *Khandana Khanda Khanday* which was commented by Citsukha in the thirteenth century in his work *Tatva Pradipika*. Sadananda, another philosopher of the 15th century wrote *Vedanta-Sara*, the quintessence of the *Vedanta*. Madhusudana wrote *Advaita Siddhi* and other works in the fifteenth century. Dikshita, in sixteenth century compiled *Sidhanta Lesa Sangraha* which contained central ideas of various branches of *Advaita*.

Thus, under the leadership of Shankara and his followers the heretics had to run away for their lives and Brahminism got back its old place in religious and intellectual field of the country. Shankara condemned Kapila and the Buddha for their disregard in the old divine sacred scriptures. He established his *Advaita* philosophy as a predominant doctrine of that age. After him there appeared another famous commentator who also left a great mark on the philosophical development of the country. He was Ramanuja, a Tamil Brahmin, who lived in the eleventh century A.D. He wrote commentaries on the *Vedanta Sutras* and on *Gita*. His theory of *Visistadvaita* meant distinction between *Brahman* the *Atman* and the world. He laid the foundation of the theistic *Vaishnava* sect of South India. He wrote *Sribhasya* and *Gita Bhasya*, wonderful commentaries on philosophical matters. His doctrine of *Shakti*, as a means of salvation came in opposition to Shankara's intellectual *monism*. In his opinion knowledge alone does not bring *Moksha* but devotion can only lead one to the cherished goal. Individual souls have no communion with God owing to the inherent disbelief in human mind. According to him, God cannot be imperfect even when people maintain no faith in him. To achieve the aim of life, there should be complete surrender without reservation to *Him* through *Bhakti*, and through *Love* and devotion on the basis of knowledge. Devotional theism became popular with the masses as it was easy to understand.

The *Dvaita* doctrine propounded by Madhava was a dualism of *Brahman* and *Jiva*. In it, *Narayana* or *Vishnu* is deified as God. It maintains a distinction between *God* and *Soul*, *God* and *matter*, *Soul* and *matter*, one *Soul* and another and a part of the *matter* and another. The *Soul* and *matter* are not independent like *God*, which has its own entity and is the ultimate power. The aim must be to remove ignorance which has a darkening effect on the self. There is perfect *Happiness* and *Beautitude* in the attainment of knowledge of *God* from the sacred books. *Bhakti* and devotion to *God* are the necessary means to have *Nirvana*, the end of birth and rebirth. Madhava wrote commentaries on the *Upanishads*, the *Vedanta Sutra*, the *Bhagwad-Gita* and *Bhagwad-Purana*. All his doctrines were compiled by him in *Tattva-Sankhyana*.

The *Purana* which means, literally old, was a class of Brahminical literature of ancient India dealing with history. The word *Pur*, means 'Past' in Sanskrit. For its subject matter, the *Puranas* have close relation with the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. The word *Purana* is often mentioned in the *Vedas*, *Brahmanas*, *Upanishads*, *Mahabharata*, and *Manusmriti*. The *Puranas* are stated to have been compiled by Bhagwan Vyas, the traditional editor of the *Vedas* and other works including the *Mahabharata*. The contents of the *Puranas* are antiquarian and out of reach of the historical computation.

The character of the *Puranas* is didactic and the purpose was sectarian, i. e., for the worship of *Vishnu* and *Shiva*. W. Durant, writing about this literature says: 'Mingled with this complex theology is a complex mythology at once superstitious and profound. The *Vedas* having died in the language in which they were written and the metaphysics of the Brahman schools were beyond the comprehension of the people. So the *Puranas* were very popular with classes of people who had no free access to the *Vedas*.'

It has been said that the composition of the eighteen *Puranas* was spreaded over a period of one thousand years, beginning from 500 B. C. to 500 A. D. In 400,000 couplets, they explain the origin of the world, its evolution and dissolution from time to time along with the stories of kings and gods and their genealogical lists. According to Amar Sinha the *Puranas* include five *lakshanas* :—(1) Primary creation, cosmogony. (2) Secondary creation or the destruction or renovation of the worlds. (3) Genealogy of gods partriarchs. (4) Manwantaras or regins of *Manu*. (5) The history of the princes of the solar and lunar race. The



post-Mahabharata events are given in more details in the *Puranas*. There are references about prayers, pilgrimages, fastings and festivals. The whole subject has been dealt with in dialogue and the topics have been explained in simple and clear style.

Just like other literature, the *Puranas* were not created in a day. The *Sutas* or the bards were the original authors as was the case with the *Epics*. Later on, the *Puranas* were given a religious colour to meet the needs of the particular class i. e. of priests. In the *Puranas*, an attempt appears to have been made to infuse new doctrines within the framework of the *Vedic* purview. It gave impetus to new a school of thought of *Vaishnavism* and *Saivism*. The language is intelligible, the parables attractive, as to bring their understanding within easy reach of common men. There was an attempt in it to reconcile the old *Vedic* religious rites and customs with the new cults. The following are the eighteen *Puranas* :—

1. Brahma. 2. Padma. 3. Vishnu 4. Siva
5. Bhagwata. 6. Agni. 7. Bhavishya 8. Brahma-Vaivartta
9. Linga 10. Varaha. 11. Skanda. 12. Vamana 13. Karma.
14. Matsya 15. Garuda. 16. Brahmanda. 17. Vayu 18. Devi. etc.

It should be remembered that different scholars have given different lists of the *Puranas* with some addition and subtraction in their respective lists.

The *Brahma Purana* is the *Adi Purana* containing information about the creation of the world. The period of the *Solar* and *Lunar* dynasties upto Krishna have been covered in it. It contains legends connected with *Manu* and other royal princes. The practice of *Yoga* has also been dealt with. This *Purana* was taught by *Suta* to other sages in the Naimisha forest.

The *Padma Purana* is more original in matter written in five books. The first book deals with the creation of the world and gives family lists of *rishis* and kings of different periods. The churning of the ocean by the gods have special reference in it. The second book contains reference about the different worlds and heavens. The third book gives an account of *Manu*, while the fourth one deals with the genealogical tables of the *Solar* and *Lunar* kings. In the last book, there is a detailed life story of Krishna. This *Purana* contains stories in support of its doctrine of the incarnation of *Vishnu*, the creator and protector of this world.

*Vayu Purana* glorifies Lord *Shiva*, with a description of the creation and destruction of the *Universe*. It is considered to be of great antiquity and it has dealt with subjects described in the *Mahabharata*.

*Vishna Purana* has six *khandas*, the contents of which agree with the *Mahabharata*. In it, have been incorporated the five *lakshanas*, viz, *Creation*, *Secondary creation*, *Genealogies* of the gods and patriarchs, reigns of *Manu* and the story of kings and princes. The first *khand* tells about the birth of *Vishnu* and *Lakshmi*, the second deals with seven *dweepas*, oceans and planets, the third with the *Vedas* and other sacred literature; the fourth with *Solar* and *Lunar* dynasties, the fifth with life of *Krishna* and the sixth with the worship of *Vishnu* and the practice of *Yoga*.

*Bhagwat Purana* contains 1800 couplets in 12 books glorifying the deification of *Bhagwata* or *Vishnu*. It is next to *Gita* in popularity and influence. The first two books deal with the creation by *Vasudeva*, the third with the birth of *Brahma* and his incarnation. The fourth and the fifth books deal with *Dhruva*, *Prithu* and *Bharat*. The sixth tells of the path through which one can attain favour of *Vishnu* by devotional *Bhakti*. The seventh book narrates the story of righteous *Prahlad* and his unjust and cruel father and so on. Great stress has been laid upon deification of personal god and devotion to him. The incarnation of *Kapila* and the *Buddha* has been narrated in this *Purana*. Its authorship has been ascribed to *Vopadeva*, the grammarian.

In the *Narad Purana* the worship of *Vishnu* forms its main subject. It throws no light on the creation, or the destruction of the universe.

*Marandeya Purana* is an oldest narration by sage *Markandeya*. The legends of *Mahabharata* have been given top priority in it. This *Purana* is non-sectarian one. There are stories about *Britar Vadh*, *Harishchandar* and a narration of quarrel between *Vishwa Mitter* and *Vaisisht*.

*Agni Murtana* is an encyclopaedia, dealing with the worship of *Shiva Linga*. There is a description of the *Vedas*, the universe and about political and social affairs. It contains references about *Alankar Shastras*, *Chhanda Shastras* and *Vyakarna*. The cult of *Vishnu* has also been dealt with.

The *Bhavishya Purana* comprises five books. The first, second, third and the fourth refer in details to *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Shiva* and *Twashtri*. There is a description about the performance of rituals and other religious ceremonies. The power of the sun is illustrated here. According to *Matsya Purana*, it is a book of prophecies, fortelling future events. It is stated that the original *Purana* was compiled in 400 B. C.



In the *Brahma-Vaivartta* the legends of *Krishna* have been told in numerous forms. His plays with *Gopikas* and his fellow comrades have been narrated in a wonderful manners. This *Purana* being sectarian is very popular among those who have theistic views.

The *Linga Purana* describes the world in which *Shiva* has been shown as the chief God. The *Brahma* and *Vishnu Purana* both received a set-back when this *Purana* came out. It contains *Mahabharatan* stories in abstract form.

The *Varaha Purana* lays great stress on devotion to *Vishnu* and speaks of the importance of holy places.

*Skanda Purana* is the biggest of all the *Puranas* consisting of six parts. In the *Kanshi Khand*, a great importance is attached to the worship of *Shiva* and *Varanasi* is considered as a sacred place. The *Utkal Khand* of this *Purana* tells about Orissa and about the god *Jagannath*.

In the *Vishnu Purana* there are legends connected with the marriage of *Shiva* and *Uma* and the birth of their child *Kartikeya*. The *Yagna* performance by *Daksha* and the story of the destruction of *Kamdev* by *Shiva* is given in detail.

The *Karma Purana* deals with the worship of *Shiva* and *Durga*. In it there is a description of the creation of the world, the incarnation of *Vishnu*, the *Solar* and *Lunar* dynasties and the path of devotion to win favour of *Shiva*.

The *Matsya Purana* narrates the story of the rescue of *Manu* by *Vishnu* in the garb of *Matsya* when the whole world was flooded with water of the oceans. It also tells about the destruction and reconstruction of the universe. It mentions of the sacred places and of festivals to be observed by the people as holy duties.

The *Garuda Purana* is a book of general knowledge glorifying *Vishnu*. Both scientific and non-scientific subjects have been discussed along with the *Mahabharata* tales. The performance of funeral rites have been given in detail. There are stories and legends to bring solace and tranquility to afflicted hearts due to bereavement. This *Purana* is often recited by the priests during funeral prayers.

The *Brahmānda Purana* gives description about the universe in general. A major part of the book deals with *Shiva*. There are stories connected with *Parashurama* and other heroes.

Besides the eighteen *Puranas* mentioned, there are books which have been called *Upa-Puranas* or supporting books. Mainly the religious rites and rituals have been dealt with in them along with the subjects of the *Epics*. Some of the *Upa-Purana* are :—

1. Sanath Kumar. 2. Naresinha. 3. Naradiya. 4. Siva. 5. Durvasa.
6. Kapila. 7. Manava. 8. Anusanasa. 9. Varuna. 10. Kalika. 11. Samba.
12. Nandi. 13. Saura. 14. Parasara. 15. Aditya. 16. Maheswara.
17. Bhagwata. 18. Vasishta.

## SECTION IV

### JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

#### A. Jainism

*Jainism* was a faith of great antiquity. According to the followers of this faith, it was Rishabha, who was the first prophet enunciating the doctrine. His name has been mentioned in the *Yajur Veda* and *Bhagwat Purana* and it was before the Christian era that he began to be worshipped by his followers. The *Jainist* followers believed that Brahminism was a degenerated form of *Jainism*. All these confusions lead one to believe that the origin of *Jainism* is shrouded in the hoary past. It has been claimed that its development took place side by side with the *Vedic* religion.

In course of time, the teachings of Rishabha gave birth to the *Tirthankaras*, the great teachers of *Jainism*, who carried his message through the successive generations and kept its torch burning. The Brahmanic heirarchy provided the ground for flourishing of these ideas. At that time, India was passing through a philosophical confusion. There was great dis-satisfaction against the prevailing social and religious conditions. A wave of independent thinking began to take root in the minds of the people. Neminatha, the twenty second *Tirthankara* gave a great impetus to the movement. But it was Parsvanatha, the twenty third *Tirthankaras* in the eighth century B. C. who provided a new interpretation to this faith, opposing *Vedic* religion which was under the shackles of caste based on birth.

Vardhamana a great saint and the last of the *Tirthankaras* was born in India, after 250 years of the death of Parsvanatha. It is said that at the age of twenty-eight, he turned away from worldly life leading an austere and rigorous path, even discarding his garments. This nude and wondering seer reached his goal through the paths of renunciation. At one time, he reached a stage where he could not differentiate between pleasure and pain. After having obtained that stature, he was declared *Jina*, the Mahavira. His followers known as *Nirganthas* came to be known as *Jain* after the term *Jina*, the Mahavira.

Vardhamana after his attainment of supreme knowledge attracted many disciples who accepted his faith in nudity also. But the followers of Parsvanatha began to advocate wearing of garments as a necessity.



From this difference, there developed a schism which lead *Jainism* to be divided into two sections, viz. *Svatambara* and *Digambara*. The followers of the last Tirthankaras refused to accept the canonical literature of the *Svatambaras*.

Mahavira was a great philosopher and an erudite scholar. He advocated and preached the Four Great Vows which he took from his predecessor Parsvanatha. *Thou shalt tell the truth. Thou shalt possess no property. Thou shalt not injure any living being. Thou shalt not receive anything which is not fully given.* These doctrines were greatly opposed to the prevailing Brahminism of the day which was based on inequality while for *Jainism* equality was a fundamental principle. Both the religions had basic differences as regards society and their attitude towards all living creatures. *Jainism* being one of the *Shramana* faiths permitted ritual rites of offering to gods. It was the devotion with the purpose of attaining the *Supreme Reality*, was their principle cult. It believed that human soul was perfect enough to reach the highest goal. There was no place for a god in the *Jain* philosophy. The followers of this faith believed in the eternity of the universe functioning according to its laws and through the interactions of the living souls.

The *Soul* or *Jiva*, the consciousness of which is the very soul the matter or *Pudgola*, liable to integration or dis-integration space or *Akasha*, time or *Kaladharm* and *Adharm*, form the kernel of *Jain* philosophy. The human soul short of *Karmic* matter reaches the state of perfection, i. e. the *Supreme Reality*. The human soul is a subjective reality, an inner and conscious one, while the matter is an objective thing lacking consciousness without any unifying character like the soul. The interactions of soul and matter based on incorrect thoughts and actions throw us into the circle of life and the death. To attain *Moksha*, which is the aim of *Jina*, right faith, right knowledge and right conduct are the ultimate paths to be followed. The commandments of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and non-attachment lead all to the goal of ultimate *Reality*.

The *Jainas* laid great stress on *Ahimsa* and the principle of non-violence. To them *Ahimsa* was truth and the truth was the ultimate Reality. It has been said that according to *Jainism* the living and the non-living by coming into contact with each other forge certain energies which bring about birth, death and various experiences of life; this process should be stopped and the energies already forged may be destroyed by a course of discipline leading to ultimate salvation.

*Jainism* brought a great religious upheaval in India in the beginning but it remained confined within its boundaries. As a result a mass of literature came out advocating its principles of philosophy and religion. *Jain* writers and philosophers were busy with literary activities of considerable magnitude during those ancient days.

The Brahmins gave lessons in Sanskrit language the Buddhists used *Pali*, while Mahavira spoke in *Ardha-Maghadhi*, a hybrid language influenced by the Western *Prakrits*. His teachings were preserved in *Sutrangas* which he administered to his disciples orally but they were all lost in course of time. But his followers made great contribution to the production to Sanskrit literature both narrative and philosophical, including grammar, prosody, lexicography and mathematics.

Mahavira attained supreme knowledge at the age of forty two and preached his doctrines for thirty years. His oral teaching were collected and edited by his chief disciples Inder Bhooti Sudharma who kept all the religious tenets in their memory. It so happened that after a century or so, a great famine broke out in the Northern part of India lasting for more than a decade. Bhadarvahu, the *Acharya* of the day, migrated out of Magadha to a distant land of Karnatak in South India, taking his chief disciple along with him. Chandra Gupta Maurya, the celebrated emperor of India is stated to have accompanied the party after his conversion to this faith. When Bhadarvahu died, Sthul Bhadra was the only *Acharya* who had the knowledge of the fourteen *Purvas*. Bhadarvahu had instructed him not to disclose the last four of the *Purvas* to any one. Sthul Bhadra summoned a council of scholars at Pataliputra to devise means for preserving the scriptures against destruction. The ten *Purvas* were re-organised into twelve *Angas*. They also decided to give up the practice of remaining nude which came down to them since the days of Mahavira. Thus when the disciples of Bhadarvahu returned back to their place after the passing over of the famine, a great schism appeared within the ranks of the *Jains*. A class of people among them left behind adhered strictly to the teachings of Mahavira and strongly resented the use of garments by the *Jains*, deviating from their master's teachings. This led the *Jains* to be divided into two sects, though their philosophical treatises remained more or less the same. Those who stuck to the original faith without any deviation were known as *Digambaras* and the others were called *Svatambaras*.

Another meeting of the *Svatambaras* was held at Mathura to discuss the sacred canons. The outcome of this meeting brought out a new version of the *Jain* religion. The scriptures came under review



again by a council presided over by Devardhi in Vallabhi in the fifth century A. D. This council gave to the posterity eleven *Angas* in the present form as the twelfth *Anga* of the old time was lost before the council met. The compilation of the new scripture was based on the old manuscripts and the oral teachings representing the words of Mahavira. The literary activities which brought out the Vallabhi version of the *Jain* religion was spread over many hundreds of years, beginning from the days of *Tirthankaras* among whom Mahavira was the last one.

(a) *Cononical Literature.*

There are *Angas*, *upangas*, *Painnas*, *Chhedisutras*, *Mulasutras*, *Nandi* and *Anugasara* in this class of literature.

The *Ayarmga*, which describes about the conduct of life based on absolute asceticism to be followed by a monk. Self mortification, death by starvation and by other means of physical tortures have been advocated. In the second part of this *Anga*, there are rules for the guidance of the monks as regards their methods of begging, taking of food and lessons on morality etc.

The *Suyadamga*, which advises the monks keep aloof from the dangers of evil path in life. There is condemnation of heretics and their false doctrines. This serves as a guide to the *Jain* monks to face the challenges of their opponents.

The *Thanamga*, which enumerates the different religious themes with information of *Sidhanta*.

The *Samavayamga*, which describes an enumeration of the twelve *Angas* and about the fourteen *Purvas*. This *Anga* is said to be the continuation of the Third *Anga*, the *Thanamga*.

The *Bhagawati Viyaka*, which explains the *Jain* faith in details with description of hell and heaven. It deals with doctrines, traditions and legends connected with Mahavira and his predecessors.

The *Nya-Dhammakahao* describes tales and adventures based on morality and religion.

The *Uvasagadasao* narrates the conversion of new adherents who ultimately received God's blessings and went to heaven on account of their rigorous asceticism and privation in life.

The *Amtagadadasao* deals with ascetics and incidents connected with their life in eight sections of the book.

The *Anuttarpvavaiyadasao* describes ascetics in ten chapters. It is an work containing some stories of tortures and rigorous life,

as given in the eighth *Anga*. This work possesses less literary merit.

The *Panha-Vagaranim* treats with five vows and the five related virtues in a dogmatic way.

The *Vivagasuyam* gives a vivid description of life after death and about the results of good and bad actions in life.

The last *Anga* is *Dithivaya* contained doctrines of general nature in five divisions but was lost in course of time before the re-arrangement of the *Angas* in the present form at Vallabhi.

## 2. *Upangas*.

The first *Upanga* called *Uvavaiya* deals with the life of Mahavira and his sermons regarding good and evil and about the functions of monks and lay persons. It also contains conversation between the Lord and Indubhuti about rebirth. The *Rayapasenaijja*, the second *Upanga* bears a *Puranic* style, in which it has been proved that there exists no relation between the body and the soul. The Third *Upanga* is *Jivajivabligama*, which gives a detailed description of the Universe. The Fourth *Upanga*, *Pannavana* is a work on ethnography and geography. The Fifth one *Surrapannatti* is a work on astronomy the basis of which is the Sun. The Sixth one *Jambuddiva Pannatti* gives an elaborate description of *Jambudip* while the Seventh one *Chandapannatti* is also an astronomical work, the subject of which is the moon. The Eighth one *Nirayavaliyoo* relates how *Cedaga* killed his ten grandsons and their subsequent births in hell. The Ninth *Upanga*, the *Kappavadamsiau* describes the story of the sons of the princes mentioned in the Eighth *Upanga*. The Tenth *Upanga*, the *Pupphiao* tells how the immortal of the heavens came to this world to rever the Lord Mahavira. The Eleventh *Upanga*, *Pupphaculiao* also gives a description of lives of the same persons mentioned in the Tenth *Upanga*. The Twelfth *Upanga*, *Vauhidasao*, abounds with the stories of conversions of twelve princes. The three *Upangas*, the fifth, sixth and the seventh occupy a unique position in the astronomical field. According to the *Jains*, there are two suns, two moons and every planet has its duplicate.

## 3. *The Painnas*.

The *Painnas* are ten in numbers. 1. *Consorana* by Virbhadra. 2. *Aurapaccakkhana*. 3. *Bhattaparinna*. 4. *Samthara*. 5. *Tamdulaveyaliya*, 6. *Camdavijjhaya*. 7. *Devimeatthaa*. 8. *Ganivijja*. 9. *Mahapaccakkhana*. and 10. *Virattha*.

The *Painnas* or *Prakirnas* deal with a variety of subjects in prose as well as in verse. There are many interesting legends connected with



the doctrine. A good number of life stories of saints and martyrs are found in them.

#### 4. *The Chhedasutras.*

The *Chhedasutras* or *Cheya-Sutras* are six in numbers, viz, *Nistha*, *Mahanistha*, *Ayaradsa*, *Kalpa*, *Pamcakalpa* and *Jiyakalpa*. The *Cheya-Sutras* though treated as canons are very useful as a source of information regarding *Jain* religion in prose and verse. In them, are given the rules for the guidance of monks and nuns to maintain discipline. The *Kalpasutra* attached to the Fourth *Sutra* is a wonderful work of Acharya Bhadravahu. The *Kalpasutra* comprises in three sections, viz, *Jina Charit*, *Thervali* and other disciplinary rules.

#### 5. *The Mulasutras.*

These are *Uttarajjhaya*, *Avassaya*, *Dasaveyaliya* and *Pimdaniijuti*. The *Uttarajjhaya* is a religious poem in thirty six sections explaining the important doctrines of the canons in dialogues, stories and maxims. The *Avassaya* contains six rules necessary for the *Jains* in performing their daily functions. The *Dasaveyaliya* tells the story of *Sejjambhava*, the author of the *Mulasutras*. The *Pimdaniijuti*, the authorship of which is ascribed to Bhadravahu treats with the conduct of life to be followed by pious persons in all walks of life.

#### 6. *Nandi and Anugasara.*

These books are of general knowledge in encyclopaedic form, which are not confined to religion alone but contain subjects like *Arthasastra* and *Kamasastra*. They are full of information about matters spread over both secular and non-secular subjects.

#### (b) *Non-Canonical Literature.*

In the field of non-canonical literature, commentaries, in the form of *Nijjuttis* occupy an important place. The *Nijjuttis* are in concise form used by the teachers in the explaining and interpreting the religious texts. These commentaries became the basis of further comments in Sanskrit in later days. The canons began to be commented upon within two hundred years of Mahavira's death. The later works of *Jain* religion were in *Prakrit* and as well as in Sanskrit. Among the *Jain* writers Bhadravahu stands aloft above all. Kundakunda, a disciple of Bhadravahu, and Umasvati, a pupil of Kundakunda, wrote authoritative works on *Jaina* religion. The latter's *Tattavarthadhigamasutra*, is an authoritative text with cosmological, ethical and metaphysical theories. He is said to be an author of five hundred books. His *Sravaka-Prajnapati* is a good guide for laymen on the *Jain* faith.

Siddhasena Divakara was a logician and Vimal Suri was a *Prakrit*

writer, to whom is ascribed the authorship of *Paumachariya*. The eighth century reared up a great scholar in the name of Hari Bhadra who was a writer of 1444 texts. He was a Brahmin by caste and had the advantage of higher studies and knowledge. It was Yakini, a nun, who once shattered his pride of learning was instrument of getting him admitted to the Jain faith by Jinabhata. Hari Bhadra was conferred the title of 'Suri' by the followers of the faith for his intellectual attainments. He wrote comments on canons pertaining to philosophy, science and religion and in both Sanskrit and Prakrit language. After Hari Bhadra, came Silacharya, Jinasena and the poet Siddha, who flourished in the ninth and tenth century A. D. Hem Chandra Suri, a disciple of Abhayadeva was a great commentator and a prolific writer of twelfth century A. D. Abhayadeva himself commented on nine *Angas*.

Another reputable literary giant was Hem chandra, a pious figure born in Gujrat in the eleventh century. He received patronage at the court of Jayasingha Siddharaja and Kumarapala, who succeeded the former. Those kings under the able guidance of Hemchandra played great roles in encouraging the spread of Jain ideals. After his conversion to the Jain faith, Kumarapala built many temples dedicating to Jain monks and *Tirthankaras*. Hem Chandra was a great scholar and writer. He was an encyclopaedist and wrote three and half crores couplets. In addition to theological works, he wrote books on secular subjects also. At his initiative literature and science made remarkable progress in those days. He was a religious reformer, a saint scholar, mystic, theologian, grammarian and a poet. He has been rightly compared with Shankaracharya and Buddhaghosha. One of his important works is *Triasti-Salka-Purusha-Charita*, an epic which contains biographical sketches of the twenty four *Tirthankaras*, of twelve rulers and of twenty seven heroes.

Another writer who left a mark on the history of literature of the day, was Maladharin Devaprabha Suri who wrote, *Pandava Charit* in 1200 A. D. Dhanesvara who flourished under the patronage of Siladitya, the Raja of Saurashtra wrote *Satrunjaya-Mahatmya* at Vallabhi. In this work the author glorified *Sutunjaya*, a mountain in verse divided into fourteen parts. It is an epic containing stories of Mahipala, a king Rsabha, the first *Jina* and of Bhim a notorious thief.

Merutungas wrote *Parbandhachintamani* which contained information about men of legendary fame. The *Parbandhakesha* of Rajashhara described the biographies of twenty four saints, poets and kings. Amitagati, a noted author wrote *Subhashitaratna-Samdaha* and *Dharmapariksha* in the eleventh century A. D. He was a strong opponent



of Brahminism and caste-system. The *Bhaktamara-Stotra* of Manatunga, The *Gathakosha* of Munichandra Suri and the *Uvaesamila* of Dharmadas are famous lyricis of the *Jain* religion. The *Yasastilaka* of Somadeva and *Tilakamanjari* of Dhanapala, *Dharmasarambhyudaya* of Hari Chandra and *Nemiduta* of Vikrama are the great epics of the *Jains*.

The *Digambaras* followed the same religious literature with slight variations. They accorded recognition to the twelve *Angas* made out of the fourteen *Purvas* of their religious texts. This section of the *Jains* followed another canon divided into four parts, viz, *Prathamanyoga*, *Karananuyoga*, *Dravyanuyoga* and *Charananuyoga*. The *Prathamanyoga* contained legends and life stories of ancient prominent persons. The *Karnanuyoga* dealt with cosmogony.

The *Jain* literature is full of legends, fairy tales and stories in prose and verse in the form of sermons for the followers of the religion. It is a remarkable literature confined not only to religion but touches every aspect of life secular and non-secular both.

Writing about the *Jain* literature Dr. Buhler says : 'They have accomplished so much of importance in Grammar, in Astrology as well as in some branches of letters that they have won respect even from their enemies and some of their works are still of importance to European science.'

Maurice Winterniz describes the *Jain* literature in his book 'History of Indian Literature,' thus : 'The *Jainas* have extended their activities beyond the sphere of their own religious literature to a far greater extent than the Buddhists have done, and they have memorable achievements in their secular sciences to their credit, in philosophy, grammar, lexicography, poetics, mathematics, astronomy and astrology and even in the science of politics. In one way or other there is always some connection even of these 'Profane' works with religion. In Southern India, the *Jainas* have also rendered services in developing the Dravidian language, Tamil and Telugo and specially the Kanarese literary language. They have, besides, written a considerable amount in Gujrati, Hindi and Marwari.

### B. Buddhism

*Buddhism* is a *nastik* faith. The *Buddha*, the Lord and the founder of this religion denied the authority and eternity of the *Vedas*. He led the revolt against the orthodox rituals of the Brahmins. In early days *Buddhism* was based on simple canons in *Pali* language. Its tenets were *anatman*, *anitya* and *dukha*. The *Buddha* laid stress upon the fact that the actions of a person of his previous existence regulate course of his lot

in this life. Evil deeds bring forth punishments and noble works are always rewarded. Albrecht weber writes : 'The Buddhist doctrine was originally of purely philosophical tenor, identical with the system afterwards denominated the Sankhya, and that it only gradually grew up into a religion in consequence of one of its representatives having turned with it to the people.....Buddhist tradition has itself preserved in individual traits a reminiscence of this origin of Buddha's doctrine and of its posteriority to and dependence upon the Sankhya philosophy.' Taking his lessons from the *Upanishadic* scholars, who threw out a great challenge against the domination of orthodox Brahminism, the *Buddha* propounded his new theory of *Moksha* through the paths of renunciation and universal love. He got his supreme enlightenment through severe penance and meditation under the shade of a peepul tree which was known as *Bodhi Vriksh*. The *Buddha* gave his first sermon to his disciples at Sarnath but in course of time that was carried beyond to far away lands through the zealous pursuits of its adherents among the kings and the commoners. The Great king Asoke and Kanishka both contributed a lot in its progress under their patronage and the religion became a great vehicle in the hands of the emissaries preaching India's ancient culture and thought.

After the death of the *Buddha* his disciples met together in a council to preserve the discourses their Master gave them orally. These speeches were compiled for the guidance of the followers of the faith. The literature thus developed cannot be attributed to the Lord himself. Those were the collections of the material the *Buddha* taught to his adherents who kept them in their memory. Since the ancient time, writing down of sacred scripture was not looked upon with favour in India, even when the art of writing developed in the country. As a matter of fact, all relating to the *Buddhist* faith was committed to writing after a couple of centuries of The *Buddha's Parinivaran*. Before that it was human memory which worked as a vast repository of the sacred literature.

The main division of the *Buddhist* literature is between *Hinayann* and the *Mahayana*; the former is called *Theravada* and the latter is known as the Vehicle of the *Buddhist*. The *Buddhist* literature remained in three collections in the form of *Tripitakas* in Pali language. It has to be remembered that the language of the *Vedas* was archaic at the time of the composition of the *Vedic* hymns. When the *Buddha* was born, Sanskrit had become a developed language in the hands of the orthodox Brahmans. The stiffness of the language due to its orthodoxy prevented



common people to learn it and as a result, the use of Prakrit developed as the language of the masses, being simple in form. So, the Prakrit became to be used by the *Buddhist* and the *Jainist* both, which in course of time became to be known as the Pali language. The followers of the *Buddha* did not want to keep their doctrines within the confines of one language or dialect. Convenience of the people was their main consideration and thus they refused to be dragged into the webs of jugglery of words.

#### Canonical literature.

The Pali canon is the oldest record of the *Buddhist* scriptures in an Indian language. It is known as the *Tipitaka*, i.e., the Threefold Basket viz, the *Vinay-Pitaka*, the *Sutta-Pitaka* and the *Abbidhama-Pitaka*. The first was compiled by Ananda, the second by Upali and the third by Kasyapa who were mutual friends and disciples of the *Buddha*. The Pali texts are more or less based on the *Upanishads*. These scriptures are the fountain out of which sprang up the whole of the *Buddhist* literature in later times. These are literary documents and treasure houses of knowledge of the *Buddhist* religion. The *Tipitaka* was the product of the Indian mind enriched and inspired by the magic spell of the Lord *Buddha*. It deals with the rules of conduct in monasteries, describes the five *Nikayas* of the faith in dialogue and treats these subjects in a scholarly manner.

#### Tipitaka

Vinay-Pitaka (Five Books)		Sutta-Pitaka	Abbidhama-Pitaka (Seven Books)
Sutta-Vibhanga		Parivara	Dhamma-Sangani Vibhanga Dhatukatha Puggala-Pannathi Katha-Vatthu Yamaka Pattahana
Khandhaka			
Mahavagga	Chullavagga		
Maha-Vibhanga	Bhikhuni Vibhanga		
Digha-Nikaya/Maijhima-Nakya/Samyutta-Nikaya/Anguttara-Nikaya			Khuddaka-Nikaya
1. Khuddaka-Patha. 2. Dhammapadam. 3. Udana. 4. Itihasa-Putta. 5. Jataka. 6. Niddesa. 7. Petakopadesa. 8. Sutta-Nipata. 9. Theri-gatha. 10. Theri-katha. 11. Theri-panthana. 12. Theri-sutta. 13. Theri-panthana. 14. Theri-sutta. 15. Theri-panthana. 16. Theri-sutta. 17. Theri-panthana. 18. Theri-sutta. 19. Theri-panthana. 20. Theri-sutta.			

1. Khuddaka-Patha. 2. Dhammapada. 3. Udana. 4. Itivuttaka.
5. Suttanipata. 6. Vimana-Vathu. 7. Peta-Vatthu. 8. Theragatha.
9. Therigatha. 10. Jataka. 11. Niddesa. 12. Patisambhida.
13. Apadana. 14. Buddhavamsa. 15. Shariya-Pitaka.

From 2500 years of Buddhism by P.V. Bapat.

*Vinay-Pitaka.*

Before knowing of the various branches of *Vinay*, it is necessary to understand *Patimokkha*, the literary meaning of which is acquittal. Winterniz describes it as a list of transgressions against the rules of discipline of the order, together with their corresponding atonements. The *Patimokkha-Sutta* is a text, composed in very early period and out of it sprang *Vinay-Pitaka*. It is one of the earliest records or documents enunciating the rules for the monks and nuns to be pursued in observing the discipline of the faith. It is a document bearing all the restraining elements which a pious soul must inculcate in one's life for his ultimate salvation. He who lived in restraints and discipline was considered to be a good monk. The *Patimokkha* had originally 152 rules, which later on increased to 227 in numbers and all these were incorporated in the *Suttavibhanga*.

The *Patimokkha* has two parts, viz, *Bhikhu-Patimokkha* for monks and for nuns *Bhikhuni-Patimokkha* containing enumeration of classified offences under *Prajika*, *Sanghadisesa*, *Anujata*, *Nissaggiya-Palittiya*, *Pacittiya*, *Patidesaniya*, *Sekhiya*, and *Adhikarana-samastha*. The code stipulated that a confession assembly should have been convened twice in a month, on the new moon or full moon days. An announcer recited the sins and asked the monks assembled, if any one of them was guilty of any sin. This admission or confession of sins in a special ceremony known as *Upasatha* was a special feature introduced by the *Buddha* to keep the faith clean of corruption and pollution.

The *Vinay-Pitaka* has been unanimously placed at the head of sacred scriptures and is the most important course of conduct and discipline pronounced by the *Buddha* to be followed by the monks. It was the foundation of the *Buddhist* order which developed into 227 rules for observance by its members. The First four of them refer to continence, theft, death by fasting and false pretension. Any violation of rules would have brought expulsion of any person from the *Buddhist* order. The *Pitaka* containing the *Suttavibhanga*, the *Khandhakas* and the *Parivara* were indispensable to the observance of morality, character and faith. These rules were attributed to tradition and circumstances which the *Buddha* made to be rules for the followers of the order. The *Vinay-Pitaka* has been described as resembling the *Vedic-Brahmanas*. It has been dealt with under three parts, viz, *Sutta-Vibhanga*, *Khandhaka* and *Parivara*. The *Suttavibhanga* tenders an explanation of the *Suttas* of the *Patimokkha*, which is the basis of *Vinay*. It is an elucidation of all the 227 *Suttas*. i.e., the rules of articles. The origin and development



of every rule has been given in detail. There is a word by word comment on each rule. In it, is found *Mahavibhanga* containing eight transgressions against the prescribed discipline and *Bhikkhuni-Vibhanga*, a small treatise with commentary meant for the nuns. In *Bhikkhuni-Vibhanga* seven groups of offences from *Prajika* to *Adhikarana-samastha* have been dealt with in compressed form.

The *Khandhakas* is a supplement to the *Sutta-Vibhanga*. It contains rules which have not been mentioned in the *Patimokkha*. The *Mahavagga* is a voluminous work comprising ten sections with principles regulating admission into the order the *Upasatha* ceremony, the way of life to be led when the rains set in the *Pavarana* ceremony at the end of the monsoon, regulation about food, medicine, dresses, legal aspects regarding difference of opinion arising within the order, expulsion and reinstatement and other rules connected with the nuns. It also referred to sexual offences and other heinous crimes with the prescriptions of punishments meted out to the culprits.

The *Chullavagga* is a small work narrating out the history of the *Buddha* and the order in ten sections. The first nine of them contain disciplinary methods with atonements and penance, the disputes and their adjustments and the life and duties of a monk. The functions and duties of nuns have been explained in the tenth section. Writing about the *Khandhakas*, Rhys David comments thus : 'From this treatise, we obtain quite incidentally a very fair insight into a good deal of the medical lore current at the early period, i. e. about 400 B. C., in the valley of the Ganges. It is a pity that the current authorities on the history of law and medicine have entirely ignored the details obtainable from these ancient books of *Buddhist Canon Law*.'

The *Parivara* has nineteen parts, each is short like the *Vedic Anukramanis* and *Parisistas*, which cast some light on the educational system of the period. They are like manuals giving summary of the rules in the form of question and answer. They are also like help books and was probably compiled by a monk of Ceylon for the benefit of those who had no time to go through the texts.

The *Sutta-Pitaka* is one of the largest of compilations and very important and indispensable source to *Buddhism*. It tells about religious truths based on psychological study which have been commented and elucidated for the guidance of the people. In it, one can have the full view of the life of monks of the other rules regulating their life and *Dharma*. It is a wonderful document incorporating the literary and

religious works in both prose and verse. This great *Pitaka* has five *Nikayas*, viz. *Digha-Nikayas*, *Maijhim-Nikaya*, *Samjutta-Nikaya*, *Anguttara-Nikaya* and *Khuddaka-Nikaya*.

The *Digha-Nikaya* is a collection of lengthy sermons in three books, differing in matter and character and independent of one another. It has thirty-four *Suttas* and each complete in itself, dealing with the doctrine in details. In it, ethical problems have been discussed refuting the Brahminical doctrines by the *Buddha*. There is a description of the world and the means to obtain *Nirvana*, self control. The art of miracles and the doctrines of the heretics have been very exhaustively dealt with. Many scholars have tried to prove that it was the earliest and authoritative work of *Buddhism* but it has to be agreed that a complete idea about the faith cannot be formed without going through other scriptures also.

The *Maijhima-Nikaya*, contains 152 dialogues and sayings in the form of *Suttas*, which are shorter than those, of the *Digha-Nikaya*. The subject of the discussion is in the form of stories, dialogues is a discourses. These are all pertaining to the *Buddhist* religion. the theory of Karma and the attainment of *Moksha*. In it, there are description of the general condition of the people and of the life, monks were used to lead. It provides knowledge about the Brahminical religious rites and the relation of *Buddhism* in general with other orders. The *Buddha's* ideas about education has been given in full detail in this book.

The *Samyutta-Nikaya* deals with psycho-ethical and philosophical problems. There are fifty six collections of sayings and sermons in it, covering all subjects of religious doctrines.

The *Anguttara-Nikaya*, has 2308 *Suttas* in eleven sections in which the sermons of the *Buddha* have been arranged numerically in an ascending order. These are very extensive and each section is further split into several parts having *Suttas* on each topic. There are a large number of *jathas* and *Suttas* and some of them are distinguished for their brevity. Various subjects have been treated in it which are of great interest from practical point of view, particularly in relation to the women folk. This *Nikaya* is the source from which sprang *Abhidhammapitaka*.

The *Khuddaka-Nikaya* contains works of miscellaneous nature in prose and verse. Winterniz calls it a collection miscellanies. Its compilation took place at a later period when its poems got recognition as the fifth sacred *Nikaya*. It is full of poetry, songs and fables. Whatever may be its place among the *Buddhist* doctrines, it has a



literary merit containing great poems of the day. It has the following fifteen texts :—

The *Khuddaka-Patha* is a short treatise having nine *mantras* or prayears which a beginner was expected to know before he could have access to other religious doctrines. It has been acclaimed as a 'prayer book' for the use of the *Buddhist*. The first four *mantras* are very short. The *Manglas* mentioned in the *Khuddaka* were used by the *Buddha* in giving lessons to his disciples.

The *Dhammapada*, occupies a unique position in the *Buddhist* literature. A very fine exposition has been given to the religious ideology in 423 verses. This book is greatly honoured on account of its ethical value and has been used as a basic book containing the sermons of the *Buddha*. In fact it has been called the central soul of the *Buddhist* religion.

The *Udana*, is a book containing pithy sayings of the *Buddha*, which the *Lord* is stated to have uttered on some extraordinary occasions. In it are eighty *Suttas* divided equally in eight sections, in both verse and prose. These utterances are in the form of stories explaining the verses for the comprehension of all. The *Udana*, glorifying the *Buddhist* way of life and the final *Moksha*, serves as an appendix to the canon.

The *Itivuttaka*, is a reproduction of the teachings of the *Buddha*, in 120 passages partly in prose and partly in verse, supplementing one another in simple language. The pieces are short but their flow is natural and flowery, provoking deep thoughts regarding human life.

The *Suttanipata*, is a great collection of *Suttas* in verse divided into five parts. These *Suttas* are very primitive in origin. *Uragavagga*, *Chulavagga*, *Mahavagga* and *Atthakavagga*, are the first four of the fifty, four poems. The fifth one *Parayana* is a poem in sixteen parts. It being a specimen of poetic art, was very popular among the commentators on the *Buddhist* literature. The *Suttanipata*, is stated to be the work of the *Buddha* him self, but doubts have been expressed about this statement by persons who say that the text was definitely of later origin.

The *Vimanavatthu* and *Petavatthu* contain stories related to divinity and at later period stories of ghosts were added to this canon. The theory of *Karma* is the main theme of these stories. In the former a saintly person explains about the results of noble actions he did in his previous life while in the latter book a ghost tells about the reasons of his unhappiness. It is depicted in them how a man's life is affected by his good and bad actions.

The *Theragatha* and *Therigatha* are the works of the Elders and Lady Elders in the form of songs. They contain religious poetry which may be compared with old lyrical poetry of India. The *Theragatha* has 107 poems in 1279 stanzas and the *Therigatha* is a collection of 73 poems in 522 stanzas, composed jointly by the brethren and sisters of the *Buddhist* religion. These two works stand as a monument to the scholarly aptitude of the monks and nuns of those days. The great intellectual upsurge that swept over the whole of India created writers from among the both sex, who were inspired to sing the glories of *Buddhism* with unprecedented devotion. Love of *Nature* was one of the contents of *Thera's* songs which were enriched by the magical utterances of the *Buddha* attracting men and women of youth, beauty and wealth.

The *Jatakas* were a collection of stories in prose and verse dealing with the 550 previous lives of the *Buddha* or of *Bodhisatta* and his attainment of *Buddhahood*. They contain stories and legends derived from the *Buddhist* sermons of saints and seers to impress upon the moral traits of the new faith. Some of the stories are of primitive days which were changed to suit the *Buddhist* needs covering both secular and religious fields. The main story is in verse followed by a comment in prose. It was called the *Mahabharata* of the *Buddhist* literature. The *Jatakas* consist of :—

1. *Pachchuppanna Vatthu*, i. e., the story of the present.
2. *Atitavatthu* i. e., the story of the past in prose.
3. *The Gathas*, a part of the story of the past in general including a part of the present also.
4. The *Veyyakarana* explains the *Gathas* to the minutest details.
5. The *Samodhana* identifies the personalities of the stories of the present with those of the past.

The subject matter of the *Jatakas* includes fables, fairy tales, short anecdotes, humorous puzzles, moral judgements pious legends and magical arts. The origin of the *Jatakas* is stated to be in the ancient Indian mythology and it has been presented clothed with the *Buddhist* ideal. Ethel Besiwick writes in his *Jatakas Tales* :—  
 'Throughout the stories we see the line of life possessing those spiritual qualities which blossom in *Buddhahood* acting in and through various types of bodies, always helping, always reasoning, acting after fore-thought, full of effort and animated by love, finally developing the power to sacrifice life itself.' The *Jatakas* occupy unique position in the sphere of Indian literature. Its contribution to the history of



civilization has been exceptionally great. The *Jatakas* depict the social conditions of India prevailing in the fourth century B. C. Its pages are full of matters of diplomacy, religious and secular subjects and other moral principles. The *Jatakas* could not be understood easily and it is the commentary in prose which brings the subject matter within the reach of common people.

The *Niddesa* is an explanation or a commentary on the first part of *Suttanipata*. There are *Maha-Niddesa*, a commentary on *Atthakavagga* and *Chulla-Niddesa*, commenting on the *Khaggavisana-Sutta* and *Parayana*. From grammatical point of view, the *Niddesa* is of great use. In it the obscure words have been explained in such a manner that it is not difficult to understand and memorise them. The Dictionaries are said to have grown out of the *Niddesa* works. Sariputta, a disciple of the *Buddha* is stated to be the first commentator on the first part of *Sutanipitaka*.

The *Patissambhidamagga* is a philosophical doctrine analysing the *Abhidhama-Pitaka* in question and answer form. It is, in three parts, each having ten books. The first part tells about the knowledge of 73 subjects in detail, the second, deals with four noble truths and the third, tells the story of the seers and pious men of ancient times.

The *Apadana* describes the previous births and lives of the *Buddhist* men of piety, in verse, which was the beginning of the *Buddhapadana*, i. e, glorification of the *Buddha*. Generally, it deals with *Arhat*, the perfect one who has destroyed three *Asavas* (corruptions).

The *Thera-Apadana* and *Theri-Apadana* occupy important places in the *Buddhist* religion. The former narrates the glorious deeds of the senior disciples of the *Buddha* and about other *Arhats* in ten *Apadanas*, while the latter deals with pious women of the faith. From literary point of view, the *Apadana* is not very useful but for the construction of biographies of men and women who gave up materialistic world and joined the mission of Gautam *Buddha*, preaching the message of their master, it had its special place. The *Apadanas* have been compared with the *Avadanas* of Sanskrit literature.

The *Buddhavamsa* gives a description of twenty four *Buddhas* preceeding Gautam *Buddha* in verse form. In it, the *Buddha* has been deified.

The *Chariya-Pitaka* is the last among the books of *Khuddanikaya*. In it, there is a collection of 35 selected *Jatakas* in versified form, the

purpose of which is to tell about Paramitas. This is an excellent work but cannot be said to have been compiled early.

### C. Abhidhamma Pitaka

The *Abhidhamma-Pitaka* is composed of seven books, in which are described the different views of different religious truths. *Abhidhamma* means religion of the higher order. It has also been defined as *Dhamma* in detail. It being a literary document of great merit, stands apart from the *Sutta-Pitaka*, though it possesses less originality. Its subject matter can be traced in *Vinay-Pitaka* and *Sutta-Pitaka* and so it is the continuation or development of thought and views already expressed. In it, the monks are asked to keep away from the busy town life and follow the eight-fold path based on the *Buddhist Trinity*, viz, the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*.

The *Abhidhamma* is also said to be a work on metaphysics but there is not much ground to accept this statement. The *Buddha* himself was not cognizant of the philosophical basis of his teachings and he simply adopted his ideas from his predecessors, but the courage and energy he exhibited in propagating his ideas contributed to his sole merit. According to Albrecht Weber '*Buddha* was more practical than philosophical.'

Of the seven books, the first is *Dhamma Samganj*, dealing with *Dhamma*. It has been called a *Buddhist* manual of psychological *Ethics*. The second one is *Vibhanga* in four sections. The third is the *Dhatu-katha* in fourteen chapters. The fourth is the *Puggalapannatti* in which individuals have been classified ethically. The fifth is *Kathavatthu* describing the history of *Buddhism* written in about 200 B.C. by Tissa, the son of Moggali and the book is very popular one. The sixth is the *Yamaka* giving explanation of every question in two ways. The seventh book is called *Patthana-Pakarana*.

### Non-Canonical Literature.

The *Milindapanha* is a compilation during the first Christian era containing conversation which took place between Milinda, known as Menandar, a Greeco Bactrian king and Nagasena the *Buddhist* sage famous for his knowledge. It stands as an authoritative text in literature. The king paid a visit to the hermitage of the saint at Sagala and there ensued a discussion over the permanence of the *Ego*. The king was very much impressed by the personality of Nagasena who solved all the knotty problems and answered all the questions of Milinda to the satisfaction of the latter. Milinda embraced *Buddhism* and built a big monastery. The *Milindapanha* describes the *Buddhist* ethics and psychology. It



has been referred as an unimpeachable authority by Buddhaghosa.

It is a work composed of seven books arranged systematically and is indispensable to both the monks and laymen. The first book is of personal nature based on historical value while the remaining ones deal with doctrines. The *Milindapanha* has been described as an historical document with great literary achievement. Bapat writing about it says, 'In short the *Milindapanha* occupies a unique position in Indian letters, whether looked at from the point of view of metaphysics or literature, or history, or knowledge of geography. It is an indisputable fact that in past canonical literature, no other treatise on *Buddhism* equals the *Milindapanha*.'

The *Netti Pakarna* or *Netti Ghandha* expounds in a fine way what the *Buddha* taught. It was compiled by *Mahakachana*, the disciple of the *Buddha*. It is the oldest book on textual and exegetical methodology. The *Petakopadesa* is a continuation of *Netti*, serving as a guide to those who study *Pitakas*. It treats on subjects revealing facts not described in the *Netti* and tells about the four indispensable truths of *Buddhism*.

The *Nidanakatha* is the first connected life story of the *Buddha* in Pali literature by an unknown author. The book is divided into the *Distant Epoch*, the *Intermediate Epoch* and the *Proximate Epoch*. It is a successful attempt to bring together all the scattered material connected with the *Buddhist* epic.

*Buddhist Scholars.*

Buddhadatta was a great scholar of indefatigable diligence and encyclopaedic learning. He went to Ceylon to study the sacred literature at Anuradhapur. On his way back he met Buddhaghosa who was going to Ceylon. He requested Buddhaghosa to send him the copies of his commentaries. Buddhadatta wrote a commentary *Abhidhammavartana*, was a better one than that of Buddhaghosa for its rich vocabulary. As a matter of fact it was he who improved the commentary on *Abhidhamma Pitaka* by Buddhaghosa. His other works are *Vinaya-Vinichchaya*, *Uttara-Vinichchaya*, *Ruparupa-Vibhanga*, *Madhurat-Vilashini* and *Jinalamkara*. His *Anagatatavamsa* is a poem containing the history of the *Buddha Metteyya* of the future while *Buddhavamsa* gives the story of past *Buddhas*.

Buddhaghosa was born near Buddha Gaya according to Ceylonese legend. He is stated to be a South Indian, a native of Andhra by some scholars. In his works he perpetrates curious typographical mistakes in his references even to the most prominent

seats of Buddhism in northern India, on the other hand his knowledge about South India is far more extensive and accurate. It seems wonderful to find a scholar, Telang by birth, acquiring so amazing a mastery of the Sanskritic Pali language of Magadha. He was converted to Buddhism by Mahasthavira Revata, who was the chief of a monastery at Gaya. *Revata* impressed him by exposing and elucidating the *Sutras* which he read. Ultimately he found solace in the *Buddha Mantra*. The initiation of this Brahmin who was a scholar of the *Vedas* made him to be a towering personality among the great thinkers of the day. Buddhaghosha possessed mastery over a wide field of knowledge. His works were comprehensive covering the whole thought envisaged by human mind. He spent a number of years in *Granthahara Parivena* at Anuradhapur and brought volumes of translations of the sacred scriptures to India. He went to Burma and started a new epoch in the history of that country. He was the most venerable and famous in other Asian lands with none to complete. He can be called the greatest exponent and interpreter of Buddhism and its scripture. He wrote commentaries on texts which were further summarised by Buddhadatta. He was not an originator but was a man of great scholarship and thus preserved the *Buddhist* literature for the followers of the faith throughout the world.

One of his first works which he wrote in Ceylon was *Visuddhimagga*. It is a compendium in which all the three *Pitakas* are summarised with a commentary. It is written clearly with lucidity presenting the doctrine systematically. This very work has made him stand on the high pedestal of immortality. The aim of his work was to discover the path to *Nirvana*. His next work was the *Samantapasadika* a commentary on the *Vinaya* depicting the social, religious and political life of ancient India. After that he wrote *Kan Khavitarani* or the *Matikattthakatha*, a commentary on *Patimokkha*. The *Nikayas Digha*, *Majjhima*, *Samyutta* and *Angutara* were commented upon by him in *Sumangalavilasini*, the *Papancasudani*, the *Saratthappakasini* and the *Manorathapurani* respectively. The last commentary *Manorathapurani* on *Anguttara-Nikaya* possesses about one hundred legends, thirteen of which deal with the life of *Theris*, the first woman who accepted the *Buddha* as master renouncing the world. It also narrates stories of persons who flourished under the blessings of the *Buddha*. Buddhaghosha is said to have made commentaries on the four books of *Khuddaka-Nikaya* and seven texts of *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. He was a shining star over the horizon of Indian literature and the finest flower of Theravada learning.



According to a Ceylonese legend he was the 'Voice of the Buddha.'

Thera Dhammapala was born in South India, not long after Buddhaghosha wrote his commentaries on *Udana*, the *Itivuttaka*, the *Vimana-Vatthu*, the *Peta-Vatthu*, the *Theragatha*, the *Therigatha* and *Chariya-Pitaka*, all known as *Paramattha Dipani*. He wrote a commentary named *Paramatthamanjusa* on *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosha. Like other scholars he also studied in Ceylon and wrote commentaries on *Singhalese Texts*. He was a great grammarian and did much service to the cause of *Buddhism* after Buddhaghosha. His literary works threw much light on the history of Southern India and Ceylon.

Ananda a contemporary of Ghosha wrote *Mulatika* or *Abhidhamma Mulatika*. Upasena is said to have written *Saddhappajatika* in which he commented on *Maha-niddesa*. Kassapa wrote a poem *Anagatavamssa* of 150 stanzas describing future *Buddhas*. Dhamasiri and Mahasami wrote *Khuddasikhka* and *Mulashkha*, a compendium of rules in about 400 A.D. Dhammakitti wrote *Parami-Mahasataka* on the ten *Paramitas* in Pali, while *Saddhamopayana* deals with doctrinal and ethical side of Buddhist religion in 629 verses.

Buddhappiya wrote *Pajja-Madhu* in which the *Buddha* had been glorified. *Tilakataha-Gathu* was another poem of great value. *Buddharakkhita* a poem of stanzas could be read from both sides. The *Jiacharita* was the life story of the *Buddha* written by Vanaratana Medhamkara.

#### *Buddhist Literature in Sanskrit.*

The Sanskrit language regained its position in the literary field, in mixed and pure form, when the *Buddhists* were divided into two sects, viz. *Hinayanis* and *Mahayanis*. The *Hinayanis* were the immediate followers of the *Buddha* having belief in *Nirvana* as the ultimate goal and regarded the *Buddhas* as supernatural beings, while the *Mahayanis* worshipped the *Buddha* as a divine being. Thus the cult of *Bhakti* was introduced in the *Buddhist* religion. The *Hinayanis* believed in *Anattata* and the *Mahayanis* in *Sunyata*.

The *Buddhist* canons began to be written in Sanskrit which became very popular in Central Asia, Tibet and China, an idea of which can be formed from fragments and literary works of *Mahavastu*, *Divyavadana* and *Lalita-Vistara*. Both the Pali and Sanskrit canons were based on the Maghadhi canon. The *Mula-Sarvastivada Vinay* explains acceptance of the *Buddhist* faith by the people of Kashmir and North-Western India.

The *Dirghagama*, the *Madhyagama*, the *Samyuktagama* and the

*Ekottaragama* have been compared to the *Nikayas* of Pali. The *Mahavastu* or *Mahavastu Avadana* written in the last century B. C. is the *Vinay* of the *Mahasangikas*, who were the earliest to fall out with their orthodox brethren, the *Theravadins*. The *Mahavastu* like the *Nidanakatha* is in three sections. The main subject of the book is the description of the life of the *Buddha*. The first section deals with hells and sufferings and the four ways of attaining enlightenment. In it, the life of *Dipankara* is described as one of the *Buddhisattvas*. The second section describes about the actual life of *Gautama*. There is narration of his birth, marriage, birth of a son, conflict with *Mara* after escape from home and finally the attainment of *Buddhahood*. The third section deals with the incidents related to the first conversion of those who accepted the words of the master and became his disciples. In it, there is also given the details about the growth of monastic life and mission of the saints.

This book is an extensive work of unconnected events. The subject is treated in prose and verse both. There is no unity of language and the subject has not been arranged at all. It has been described by *Winterniz* as a labyrinth. It is not within the easy grasp of the reader. But it does not mean that the *Mahavastu* carries no importance in the *Buddhist* literature. It is a very useful work if it is carefully read and examined, because it displays old traditions and versions of sacred texts. The *Jatakas Avadanas* find a conspicuous place in this book. Though the work speaks much of the *Hinayanis* in general, yet it contains matters regarding *Mahayanis* also.

The *Lalita-Vistara* is the earliest text of the *Hinayanis*. The *Mahayanis* made some changes in it to suit it to their ideology and named it *Vaipulya-Sutra* or the *Mahayana Sutra*. It relates about the *Buddha*, the divine, with 12000 monks and 32000 *Boddhisattvas*, around him and gods are also shown to be waiting on him while he was in meditation and ready to carry out his commands. The *Lalita-Vistara* can be said to be the biography of the *Buddha* drenched with *Mahayan* spirit. The whole book has not been regarded as an authoritative source for the knowledge of *Buddhism*. But considering from the literary and religious point of view, it is an wonderful text and is highly acclaimed and respected by the *Buddhists* all over the world.

The *Vaipulya Sutras* contain nine books.

1. *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita*
2. *Saddharmapundarika*
3. *Lalita Vistara*.



4. Lankavatara or Saddha Malanka-vatara
5. Suvarnaprabhasha
6. Gandavyuha
7. Tathagata guhyaka or Tathagatuguna Jnava.
8. Samadhiraja
9. Dasabhumisvara

The *Lalita-vistara* is an incomplete biography of the *Buddha*. The *Saddharmapundarika* is a Mahayana work of typical nature. The Gautama has been created God of gods and the creator of the Universe. The *Prajnaparamita* is a great philosophical work dealing with virtues required for *Nirvana* and the attainment of Bodhi.

*Asvaghosha.*

Asvaghosha was a poet and philosopher born in Saketa during the reign of the powerful emperor Kanishka. Formerly a Brahmin by birth, became a staunch exponent of the *Mahayana* school of thought. He has been described as a musician, a preacher, a moralist, playwright and an inventor, who made use of Sanskrit, the language of the aristocrats as his medium of expression. He was a powerful debater and very few could stand against his arguments. His opponents broke down like withered trees against the blast of the stormy winds. His voice was melodious and his songs made many listeners his devotees and admirers. On the authority of I-tsing who visited India between 671 and 695 A. D., it can be said, that his works commanded great respect and popularity. His chief aim was to stress on *Buddha-Bhakti* and his writings gave full expression to it. He was a successor of Valmiki and an inspirer and forerunner of Kalidasa and thus stood midway between those two stalwarts in the field of Indian literature. His important works are *Buddha-Charit*, *Saundarananda Kavya*, *Sutralamkara*. He has been called a many-sided genius, unusually versatile and creative. It was Asvaghosha's poetic treatment of love of the *Buddha* that helped in no small measure.

The *Buddha-Charit* is a *Mahakavya* to which is presented true picture of the *Buddha's* life and his teachings in enlightened and rich vocabulary for the delight of the aspirants after the faith.

The compilation of the *Buddha-Charit* was a great chronological landmark. The original was in twenty eight cantos but only seventeen are extant. The old legends and events have been given a new planned shape in this book, with excellent descriptions making the subject lucid and clear. The author had not the serenity of the old *Epics* or the unrivalled delicacy and cleverness of the classical poets. Writing about

this book I-tsing says : '*Buddha-Charit* is widely read and sung throughout the five divisions of India and the countries of the Southern Sea. In it, have been clothed manifold meanings and ideas in a few words which rejoice the heart of the reader so that he never feels tired from reading the poem.'

The *Saundarananda* contains a story in a poem how Nanda, the half-brother of the *Buddha* was converted by him. Nanda was stranded between the love of his beautiful wife and the teachings of his brother. His inclination was towards the beauty and youth. The poet carries Nanda to heaven where he compares his wife with the beauty of the heavenly *Apsaras*, who developed a longing for them. Ultimately he gives up his desire for women and accepts the doctrine and becomes an *Arhat* after the attainment of *Nirvana*. The aim of the poem was to have preached the utility of the doctrine in an ornate form which is extant in eighteen *Sargas* only. The *Buddha-Charit* and *Saundarananda* contain legends of Brahminical origin and were written when the *Mahayanism* was in its infancy.

Another work *Sutralamkara*, known in Sanskrit as *Kalpamauditika*, is ascribed to the authorship of Asvaghosha, which is a collection of tales in both prose and poetry. The book had been written by Kumaralata according to the opinion of some scholars. Asvaghosha wrote a number of dramas also. The credit of discovering them goes to H. Luders, who found them in Central Asia. One of them *Sari-Putra-Prakarana*, though in fragments is of great importance and is the earliest drama in Sanskrit literature. In it has been shown how *Sariputra* and *Maudgolyayana* were made to accept the *Buddhist* doctrine.

The *Vajrasuchi*, a book decrying the Brahminical caste-system had been ascribed to the authorship of Asvaghosha but this statement had been doubted by many scholars in later days.

Nagarjuna, who stands next to Asvaghosha was a Brahmin of Southern India. He was a master of the four *Vedas* and of the science of sorcery. His attempt to outrage the chastity of women through his magical powers was detected but he escaped death which his companions met with. He turned out to be a Buddhist. Being a man of great genius he could learn all the sacred scriptures in no time. As a result, in the realm of *Buddhism*, Nagarjuna became a towering personality with matchless inspiration for the people of the coming generations. He has been acclaimed as a scholar and magician by all who followed him. Yuan Chwang places him as one of the four great



sons of India alongwith Asvaghosha, Kumaralabdha and Aryadeva, ever shining on the intellectual horizon of the land. The Western writers treat him as one of the wonders of the later Buddhism. Nagarjuna was a great dialectician and an illuminating intellectual in the field of philosophical thoughts amongst his predecessors and successors both. He became the chief guide of Nalanda, the charge of which he later handed over to his disciple Aryadeva.

He founded the *Madhyamaka* school and wrote *Madhyamika karika* or *Madhyamika Sutra*, in twenty seven chapters, having four hundred verses with a commentary, known as *Akutobhaya*, which is extant only in Tibetan translation. The authorship of twenty works has been ascribed to him. The most important among those are *Yutisastika*, *Sunyata-Saptati*, the *Mahayana-Vimsaka* and *Suhre-Lekha*, i. e., letter to a friend which was committed to memory by the children later on and became a very popular theme.

Aryadeva, was a follower and disciple of Nagarjuna. He was a strong champion of *Madhyamika* school which his preceptor Nagarjuna established. He dedicated his soul for the propagation of the *Buddhism* and ultimately became a legendary figure in the history of the faith. It is said that he was murdered by one of his rivals, whom he himself pardoned before he died and such was his greatness. Hailing from Ceylon, he spent his life in India as a staunch follower of the *Buddhist* faith, engaging himself in preaching, teaching and defeating the opponents of other faiths in discourses and arguments. He left behind his name many literary works.

Asanga and Vasubandhu both, were born in Brahmin families in the fourth century A. D. Asanga being converted to the *Buddhist* faith joined *Sarvastivada* but later he became a follower of Maitreya who had established *Yogacara* school of thought which advocated that consciousness was everything. He wrote *Mahayana-Samparigraha*, the *Prakarana-Aryavaca*, the *Yogacara-bhumisastra* and the *Mahayana-sutralmkara*. The last book, although ascribed to the authorship of Asanga, is stated to have been written by his master. He had excellent command over the language and his expression was exceedingly beautiful.

Vasubandhu accepted the *Mahayani* faith at the instance of Asanga. He wrote *Abhidharma-Kosa*, when he was a follower of *Sarvastivada* school of the *Hinayana*. This work of 600 *karikas* was an encyclopeadia of the *Buddhist* philosophy. In it he attacked *Brahminism* and *Vaiseshika*. The *Kosa* was commented by Yasomitra

in his *Abhidharmakosa-Vyakhya*. The original work was very popular and read all over India, as it provided answers to points of disputes. Bana writing about the Kosa says : 'Even parrots explained the Kosa to one another.'

He wrote *Gatha-Samgraha*, a work of humour. His other works *Vimsatika* and *Trimiska*, of twenty and thirty *Karikas* respectively were expositions championing consciousness and its reality. He wrote *Paramartha-saptati*, in which he attacked *Vindyavasi*, an exponent of *Samkhya* philosophy, who was his contemporary. He also wrote commentaries on *Mahayana-Sutras*, on the *Sadharma Pundarika*, the *Maha-Pari-nirvana-Sutra* and the *Vajracchedika prajnana-Pramita*. Vasubhandhu commanded a great honour and respect and came to be known as the second *Buddha* during his life time.

Dinnaga, was a prominent scholar and a logician in the *Buddhist* India. He has been described as one of the foremost figures in the history of Indian philosophy. Born in a Brahmin family, he came under the influence of Vasubhandhu. He was originally a *Hinayani* but later became a devotee of *Mahayanism*. He is stated to have written one hundred works out of which some were studied as texts. He wrote *Pramana-Samuchya*, the *Nyaya-Pravesa*, the *Hetuchakra*, the *Pramana-Sastro-Nyayapravesa*, the *Alambana-Pariksa*, in which he criticised Vatsyayana and his *Nyaya-Bhasya*.

Chandrakirti was born in the Southern part of India. He had a scholarly mind and read exhaustively the scriptures from the beginning of his childhood. He was bestowed with sharp intellect and studied under Nagarjuna and Kamalabuddhi and become a great scholar at Nalanda. He wrote many books, and *Madhymakavtara* being his principal work and a commentary on *Catuksatika* of Aryadeva.

Chandragomin a contemporary of Chandrakirti was a grammarian of repute. He was a philosopher and a poet, who created a name in the *Buddhist* world during the Seventh century A. D. His *Sisyalekha-Dharma-Kavya*, a letter to a friend, is a poem of brilliant scholarship.

Santideva was born in a royal house in Saurashtra. He renounced the material world, coming under the spell of Jaideva at Nalanda. He wrote *Siksa-Samuchya*, *Sutra-Samuchya* and *Bodhi Caryavatara*. The *Siksa-Samuchya* consisting of twenty seven verses is a work in which are found the *Mahayani* principles of *Buddhism* in a compressed form. The author claims no originality or literary merit. His *Bodhicaryavatara* expresses his religious frame of mind which ultimately led him to enlightenment.



## SECTION V

### SANSKRIT LITERATURE

The etymological meaning of the word Sanskrit is purified. This language is rich in literature both in secular and non-secular subjects. For more than three thousand years this language has been serving India uninterruptedly playing an important role in the cultural and intellectual life of the people. It has contributed greatly as a unifying factor in this land of many races and languages. Although eclipsed at times for short periods, it continued occupying the foremost position amongst the comity of national languages of India. It served as a source and treasure house for other languages to flourish and thus offered a sound basis for their development. It attained an international status for its enriched ideas during the ancient and medieval periods of history. It is still a dynamic force engaging the attention of the scholars of the day in unearthing the hidden knowledge stored in it during the most glorious period of Indian civilization.

In ancient days, the Aryans gave shape to their thoughts in the form of hymns and subsequently compiling those into the *Vedas*. The language of those sacred scriptures was hieratic and conventional. The development of Sanskrit is found in the time of the *Rig Veda* and subsequently it flourished through the pages of later *Samhitas*, *Brahmanas* and other sacred literature. This language had a spoken character, the fact of which has been mentioned and verified by Yaska in the Seventh century B.C. and by Panini in the Fourth century. Both of them have dwelt upon the eastern and western features of Sanskrit.

The *Vedas*, the *Epics* and the *Puranas* were firmly established in the soil of India before the *Buddha* appeared on the scene. From time to time, attempts were made to keep the language of those sacred books abreast of clear words to bring those within easy reach of the people. These attempts on the part of the scholars led to the growth of the study of grammar. The grammatically educated people maintained the purity of the language, while the uneducated carried on with the vernacular language which was not based on strict grammatical rules. Thus a cleavage between vernacular and Sanskrit developed in course of time.

Another factor also contributed greatly in the development of the language that was the language of the aboriginals whom the Aryans conquered in course of time. Much of many dialects mingled together with the result that the consonant predominating the Aryan language presented difficulties to the native people who acquired the knowledge of the Aryan language from intercourse and association. Its result was the important role of the vernacular in the history of the language of the people. Gradually a schism developed between the written language of the educated class and the popular dialect. In spite of that, the Sanskrit language remained a very popular one. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for the writers of sacred scriptures, *Kavyas*, *Dramas* and of other scientific and social subjects to write in Sanskrit as a media of their thoughts. The amount of Sanskrit literature produced during those days was of considerable volume and they must have been understood by the people at large. The bards and singers of the day wandered from place to place singing their songs, giving plenty of pleasures to their listeners who could understand and appreciate the language. Even tablets and panegyric inscriptions were written in Sanskrit. All the religious rites and domestic rituals were performed in that language. In a word, it became the medium through which astronomy, grammar, prosody. Itihas Purana, gatha, art and architecture all developed in an unprecedented scale.

Much resentment grew up against the domination of the Brahministic orthodoxy and the rigidity of the sacred scriptures which led ultimately to the revolt against the religious order of day. A sense of hatred against the Brahministic cult made the reformers even to boycott the Sanskrit Language which was a dominant dialect in those days. The *Buddha*, the apostle of one of the new faiths, forbade the use of Sanskrit as a means for preservation of his teachings. But in course of time, this attitude of hostility towards the language diminished and scholars of *Budhhism* and Jain religion of the later time, began using Sanskrit language freely in propagating their literay ideas. Previous to the re-acceptance of Sanskrit by the scholars of *Buddhism* and *Jaininsm*, *Prakrit* and *Ardh-Magadhi* were made use of, as a means to popularise the message of the *Buddha* and *Mahavira*. Almost all the edicts of Asoke were inscribed in Prakrit for the guidance of his subjects. Hence the growth of regional languages was also a factor in diminishing the supremacy of Sanskrit for a considerable period of time. But it was in the Gupta period that the revival of Brahminism brought back the supremacy of the Sanskrit language in the cultural and intellectual field of



India. One factor greatly contributing to the re-appearance of Sanskrit language to the predominant place was the difference of opinion in the ranks of scholars about the *Prakrit* language. Thus Sanskrit got back its lost prestige and even *Mahayanis* recognised it for using in their religious canons even before the Guptas began to patronise it during their imperial rule. The Gupta rule has been described as the golden period of the Sanskrit literature, when it became the lingua franca of the country. It also became the medium of intercourse between India and greater India and other *Buddhist* countries.

The *Prakrit* language is said to have originated from Sanskrit. Grierson has classified the development of *Prakrit* in three stages, viz, *Prakrit* of the *Vedic* language, *Prakrit* represented in *Pali* and *Prakrit* of grammar, dramas and of other literature. This language had a flourishing time in the hands of the *Buddhists* and *Jains*, who enriched it, writing innumerable sacred books and philosophical treatises in the prosperous days of their respective religions. It became so popular with the people that this language relegated and shadowed Sanskrit for a considerable time. It became the court language during the reign of Asoke and his descendents.

*Pali* was a literary form based on *Magdhi* dialect. It was mostly used by the *Hinayana* sect of the *Buddhism*. The *Magadhan* dialect sprang from *Prakrit*, which had three separate forms, viz, *Western*, *Central* and *Eastern* dialects. In the *Western* group fall *Bhojpuri* and *Sadani* or *Chota Nagpuri*; in the *Central* group come *Maithili* of North Bihar and *Magdhi* of South Bihar and in the *Eastern* group are *Assamese*, *Bengali* and *Oriya*.

In spite of eclipse of Sanskrit language for some period, it had been always a popular medium of expression with the poets, dramatists, scholars. Through their great works they endeavoured to unite this country into one whole out of diversity.

#### *Kavya or Epic*

Kalidasa, the scion of literary India was born in a Brahmin family. He possessed a great skill in the art of composition of verses from his boyhood. He had familiarity with the whole range of *Vedic* literature. He was also a widely travelled man knowing many parts of India which he described in great detail in his books. His ingenuity and brilliance in the poetry and dramas made Kalidasa immortal in the literature of India. His knowledge was so varied that he had mastery over philosophy, *dharmaśāstra*, *dharmaśūtra*, *natyaśāstra*, *vyākaraṇa*, *jyotiśāstra* and over art of music, dancing and painting. In his great

books, he has portrayed the culture, thought and social conditions of the golden age of India. Kalidasa stands not only unsurpassed in poetry and drama but also stands as the greatest classical poet of India. He was not merely a poet of aesthetic beauty but his ideas were great in high ideal and soaring thought.

Usually it is believed that Kalidasa flourished in the first century B. C. but nothing could be said about it with precision and authority. His date of birth still remains a controversial matter regarding which there is disagreement among scholars. It has to be recognised that literature, epics and puranas were in full bloom before Kalidasa appeared on the scene. But Kalidasa has been given the highest rank for his unparalleled graphic beauty, spontaneity and appositeness in his literary skill.

Sri Aurobindo has raised Kalidasa to the stature of great saints and scholars like Valmiki and Vyasa. According to him, Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa are the essence of history of ancient India ; if all else were lost, they will still be its sole and sufficient cultural history.' Kalidasa was a supreme poet of the senses, of aesthetic beauty, and of sensuous emotion. He had mastery over all kinds of figure of speech but above all he was unsurpassable in his intelligent, enrapturing and graceful similies. His outstanding literary works are *Ritusamhara*, *Meghduta*, *Kumarasambhava* and *Raghuvansha*. The first two works are mentioned amongst the lyrical works.

*The Kumarasambhava* is a poem of elegy in seventeen Cantos, out of which the first seven Cantos describe the courtship and wedding of Lord Shiva with Parvati. The other ten Cantos have not found favour in printed form on account of its erotic character. Uma fails to catch the eyes of Lord Shiva. The Kama Devata was approached but his aid proved fatal for himself as he was turned to ashes by Lord Shiva. Uma was not disheartened but continued her relentless efforts with determination and for that she had to expose herself to wind, rain, heat and icy water. At last Shiva's heart was moved at her devotion, love and asceticism and he granted her request. Uma was jubilant and the union took place to the happiness of gods who were afraid of Taraka, a demon. Kumar, the war god was born and while a young boy he killed Taraka, at the behest of Indra.

The *Kumarasambhava* has a deep appeal on account of its rich variety, warmth of feeling and excellence of its fancy. The pictorial quality of the poem is of high order and by it the literary quality of the Sanskrit language has been very ably exhibited.

The *Raghuvansha* contains nineteen Sargas or Cantos depicting the



family lineage of *Raghu*, The first nine of them portray the life and condition of the kingdom ruled by Dalip, Raghu, Aje and Dashrath, the father of Ramachandra. Rama and his successors are depicted in the last Sargas. This book is one of the finest specimens of Kalidas's poetic skill and ingenuity. The narration of the marriage of Indumati and the lamentations and mournings of Aje on her death, have been so beautifully written, exhibiting the excellent quality of the poet's imaginative mind. Further, the poet narrates many episodes like the coronation of the king, about the Svayambra, of an Apsra (fairy) in her former birth, about the town, the hills and other exploits of the king who was out to conquer the whole world.

This poem has been very much appreciated for its striking similes. The narration is rapid and the reader does not lose interest even in lengthy descriptive situations. Kalidasa has mentioned Valmiki as the first poet in this work. The *Kumarasambhava* and *Raghuvansha* have close resemblance. Several stanzas of both the poems are common, some are with slight variations and many are analogous in thought. The same metre is employed to describe the same situation in both the poems, with a little change at the beginning of new sarga or Canto.

Bhairavi was another outstanding poet, who left behind a great mark on the field of literature. Although, in pure literature he was far below the rank of Kalidasa, yet his epic creation *Kiratarjuniya* has been acclaimed as a high literary work. In this drama, he described the fight between Arjuna and Lord Shiva disguised as Kirat. This book is of eighteen Cantos and the fifteenth Canto is full of narration of the art of tricks. The story refers to the situation when the *Pandavas* were seeking for shelter in Dvaita forest. All were eager, except Yudhisthir to break the pledge of cease-fire and resume hostilities against the *Kauravas*, who deprived them of their due share. Vyasa advised the *Pandavas* to go to Kamayaka forest because the war between the two warring camps was inevitable. Arjuna led by Yaksha went to the Himalayas to obtain divine weapons. The accompanying Yaksha gave out his identification and then vanished in the mountains. Arjuna started *Tapasya* in self mortification, undergoing severe penances in Indralika. The king of gods *Indra* got frightened for the safety of his person and his kingdom. As a result, he deputed *Apsaras* (fairies) and *Ghandaravas* to divert Arjuna from his mission to the world of beauty and youth. In enchanting beautiful verse, the poet described there the appearances of the *Apsaras* to mystify Arjuna alluring him to give up his vow, but all attempts proved futile and Arjuna remained unaffected by their



enticement.

Indra himself came and pleaded with Arjuna that asceticism and bearing of arms had no relation with each other and thus could not go together. Arjuna remained firm because the honour of his family was at stake and its vindication was his ultimate aim. On the advice of Indra Arjuna prayed to Lord Shiva but he was challenged by Kirata, a mountaineer, when Arjuna went to get back his arrow from the dead body of a boar whom he had struck. There went on a deadly fight between the two contestants and ultimately Lord Shiva being impressed with the bravery and courage of Arjuna, granted him with the boon to receive the weapons he craved for.

The whole story is described in an attractive manner. The beauty of the maidens and exquisiteness of nature have been so ably painted that the readers are wonder-struck at the highly gifted quality of the poet. All through, his expressions and language of the poem have remained lofty and full of romances. The realistic and as well as the imaginative power of the poet have been exhibited in excellent form and for this Bhairavi was acclaimed as a noteworthy poet of that age.

Another poet named, Bhatti, was a court poet of Shridharasena, king of Vallabhi, in the Seventh century A. D. His most important literary creation was the *Bhatti Kavya* or *Ravanvadh*, a story based on the life history of Rama in twenty two cantos. The poem served as a lamp to persons conversant with grammar and to others as a mirror who had no eyes to see. The poet himself wrote that his poem needed a comment, meaning that deep penetration into that literary feast by an intelligent reader was necessary to understand the subject matter. The object of the poet was not to tell the story but to illustrate the grammatical rules of Sanskrit as given by Panini in his *Ashtadhyayi*. Bhatti has been identified with Bhartri Hari, who died in 651 A. D. by some commentators. His work inspired and served as a torch bearer for others including Magha, a renowned poet of that day.

Kumar Dasa, the author of *Jankiharan*, was another poet who got inspiration from *Raghuvansha* of Kalidasa. He was a king of Ceylon from 517 to 525 A. D. A remour was current during those days that Kumar Dasa had a hand in causing death of Kalidasa, the gem at the court of king Vikramaditya. The *Janakiharan* was a work of twenty five Cantos but fifteen of them are extant. By an able hand the poet described all the incidents of Rama's life in a sweet and simple style. Kumar Dasa was not only a poet but a great grammarian whose reputation made him immortal throughout the ages.



Magha was a meritorious poet, perhaps after Bhairavi, in the last quarter of the 700 A. D., who left behind a stirring fame in the literary field of ancient India. He wrote *Sishupal Vadh* a work of great literary value. The story runs that Sishupal who displeased gods by his impertinent acts, became a problem for them. The sage Narada appeals to Krishna to do away with him. At last it was decided to fight him out. Krishna being advised by Udhav went with his army to Indraprastha, to attend where the king Yudhishtir of the *Pandavas* organised a *Rajsuya Yajna*. The honour accorded to Krishna by the host annoyed Sishupal, who took it as personal insult. A fight ensued and Sishupal was beheaded by the discus (*Sudarshan Chakra* of Krishana. Previously Krishana promised to excuse Sishupal upto one hundred mistakes, but this act was hundred and one and so he was killed for his guilt.

Magha, was a poet who had complete control and mastery over the language. His work *Sishupal Vadh* was in twenty Cantos. It was a thought provoking and imaginative literature full of artistic skill and poetical excellence. Magha has been compared with Bhairavi. The sources of both the *Kiratarjuniya* and *Sishupal Vadh* were from the *Mahabharata*. Bhairavis god was *Shiva*, while that of Magha was *Vishnu*. In *Kiratarjuniya* there is a discussion between Yudhishtira and his brothers, while *Sishupal Vadh* narrates the conversations of Krishna, Udhav and Balaram. Vyas is the saintly guide in *Kiritarjuniya*, whereas Narada performs the same function in the *Sishupal Vadh*. Nature has played a great role in this poem of Magha, where he sang in beautiful verses the glories of the evening, night, moon and of the changing seasons.

Mantha known as Hastipaka wrote *Hayagrivavadha* in the later part of the sixth century. He was a man of religious temperament and thus he occupied a principal place in the lineage of spiritual poets. He was much honoured and rewarded profusely by Matragupta during his rule.

Bhauma or Bhumaka or Bhima, a poet of considerable merit, attained fame in Kashmir by writing his famous book *Kavya Ravanarjuniya* or *Arjunaravaniya* in twenty-seven parts, in which he described the struggle between Arjuna, Kartavirya and Ravana. The rules of grammar were kept always in view by the poet when writing this epic. The whole of *Ashtadhyayi* had been given practical shape and thoroughly discussed in this book.

Halayudha, another writer, wrote *Kavirehasya*, an eulogy of the

Rashtrakuta ruler, Krishna. The purpose of the poet was to describe the method of forming present tense in the Sanskrit language.

Another poet of Kashmir was Ratnakara, son of Amrit Bhanu, who adorned the court of Brahspati or Chippat Jayapida at about 850 A. D. According to Kalhana, Ratnakara was at the full bloom of his fame during the time of Avantivarman. He wrote *Harvijayain* in fifty Cantos, dealing with the story of killing of Andhaka the blind son by Shiva, his father. The story says that Parvati in a sportive mood, binds the eyes of her husband Shiva. The conception that took place at that time, lead to the birth of a blind son to Parvati. Andhaka gets his eye-sight after a long penance and meditation. He was an ambitious man and became a ruler of three worlds. Ultimately, he died at the hands of his father, Shiva. Eleven of its Cantos are composed of the discussions between god and his followers. In thirteen Cantos, there are descriptions of sports and plays. Seven others narrated what transpired between Andhaka and a messenger from his father. In four other Cantos, the poet tells about the army of Shiva. Two more works of worth-mentioning were written by Ratnakara. viz, *Bakroktipanchashika* and *Dhwanigathapanjuka*. In these books, the poet dealt with political science, Kamasutra and history. Ratnakara was highly admired by his successor poets like Kshemendara and others

Abhinanda, son of Jayanta Bhatta of Kashmir, wrote *Kadambari-Kathasara*. There was another Abhinanda whose identity could not be known, composed *Sita-haran*, a work, full of pathos and exciting situations.

Kshemendra, also from Kashmir, wrote three poems, viz, *Ramayana-Manjari*, *Bharata-Manjari* and *Dasavatara Charita*.

### *The Lyrical Poetry*

Although in ancient India literature was renowned for Epics and dramas, yet it did not lack in lyrical poetry, known as *Khand-Kavya* or *Geeti* in Indian language. Kalidasa, the celebrated poet of ancient India was the first lyrical poet who ranks unparalleled and unexcelled even to day. His literary skill was so colourful and diction so diversified, that many of his literary works have been challenged to be of the same hand. The authorship of his works *Ritusamhara* and *Meghduta* have been questioned by many critics owing to the differences in the writing style of these works and his later creations. Like all other great poets Kalidasa had also his literary evolution, thus developing his skill and ingenuity step by step, and ultimately he reached the



highest peak.

*Ritusamhara*, literally means the circle of seasons. The particular poem brought much name and fame to Kalidasa. It is devoid of ethics and its beauty lies in simplicity and elegant rendering. It stands as the first poem in the history of world literature in which nature has been made the sole subject matter. In it has been shown a young spirit describing all the colours and effects of the seasons in exquisite language. It says that although the summer is hot and devastating yet it has cool and refreshing nights. The rainy season is compared to a battle scene where a king rides on the crest of clouds with lightening as a hammer and thunder as a war drum. The autumn is a young and beautiful bride, with a face full of blooming lilies. The winter, though bitter and nerve raking, yet it offers an opportunity to lovers to embrace each other for the enjoyment of the full moon of life. It is followed by the spring, bringing pleasure in its wake, inflaming the hearts of the young to the lovable thought and subjects. The pictorial quality of the poem portraying various beauties of the different seasons with all their passions and feelings are wonderful creations of literary art which gave immortality to Kalidasa.

Another immortal creation of Kalidasa, is *Meghduta*, composed of 112 strophes, written by him at his advanced age. Yaksha, who was in service of Lord *Shiva*, was ordered by his master to go into exile leaving his home and wife behind. Thus the banished Yaksha was love-lorn and aspired to be near his wife. He conveyed a message of his welfare to his beloved through the agency of the cloud. The cloud passed on from Ramgiri where the exiled Yaksha lived in Alaka hills, to the residence of his beloved in the far distant Himalayas. The vivid description of the movements of the cloud acknowledged that Kalidasa was well versed in the geography of the land. This nature's messenger becomes the instrument in the skilful hand of the poet to carry the bewailings of a broken hearted Yaksha to his object of love, assuring her not to lose hope and telling that reunion in future will bring pleasure and happiness to their lives. The poem is a brief one but it is very rich. It is an excellent work of pure poetry rich with nature's description. Kalidasa was a poet of love and optimism and almost all his poems bear this key note as their central theme. *Meghduta* is a unique lyric of love in which the magic of the poet's imagination reaches its height. It is full of description of the beauties of nature right from beginning to end.

Another lyrical poet of ancient India was Hala, who wrote *Gatha Saptshati* in the first century A. D. This book was a collection of 700

*Chhandas* in Prakrit which was quoted by Dandi and other eminent poets. In it, the village life and natural surroundings have been described in a beautiful fashion and sweet setting. The poem contains the description of the life of a married couple, where the husband extolling the beautiful face of his wife compares it with the moon in the sky. This poem served as a model for the later poets. It is a beautiful composition and a rich store-house of lyricism in which love has been combined with nature.

Bhartrihari was an eminent writer who flourished in the first half of seventh century. He was a grammarian, a philosopher and a poet. On the authority of I-Tsing, the Chinese traveller, it can be said that Bhartrihari possessed a versatile mind. He belonged to a royal family and in the later life, became a monk. It has been said that he constantly changed himself from one way of life to another very quickly. He was always wavering in his creed. To his authorship are ascribed three works, viz, *Nitishatak*, *Shringarshatak* and *Vairagyashatak*. The *Nitishatak* is a work of conduct, where bravery and broad-mindedness have been extolled greatly. The subject of this poem has an universal approach, irrespective of religion, country and caste. The *Shringarshatak* is a treatise on love in which has been shown how women with their charms and arts captivate the hearts of men. The poet had an extensive knowledge of love and sex. The poet admitted that a man loses himself if he is in love and all his brightness of life goes out, if he is away from his beloved one. In *Vairagyashatak* the poet mentions of the various phases of this world and dwells upon the necessity of renunciation, i. e. non-attachment with the worldly affairs. This book is of hundred verses divided into ten groups.

Amaru wrote *Amaru-shatak*, a collection of his one hundred stanzas in which he shows himself on the crest of the wave of painters who delighted in painting lovers in all their moods of bliss and dejection, of anger and devotion, estrangement and reconciliation. The poet had a penetrating mind for thought and delicacy of feeling. The *Amaru-shatak* is a living picture of love and sexual joys, though its wordings are extremely refined. The poet occupies an important place amongst lyrical poets.

Gharakarpara, who was a poet at the court of Vikramaditya, wrote *Ghatakarpura*, a small poem of twenty two stanzas in which a love lorn woman conveys to her husband her love through the agency of the cloud.



*Historical Writings.*

Although Indian literature was not very rich with historical themes, in early days, yet it cannot be said that it had nothing at all. The great wealth of the *Epics*, the *Puranas* and specially the inscriptions engraved on the rocks, pillars and plates of copper and iron have enriched human knowledge and civilization both throughout the ages. The *Epics* were the collections of the songs of the bards who moved from place to place and sang of stories of valour and gallantry of the rulers of the past. The old *Puranas*, according to Albrecht Weber, contained historical portions, which came down to us as the saga of the different dynasties of kings whose chronology got mixed up with one another. There may be discrepancy in dates and chronological events in ancient anecdotes but those have proved to be of great value to the historians. The engraved inscriptions played a tremendous role enabling historians to find out the truth of the past. Those proved a source of the highest value for the reconstruction of the political history of ancient India. Being engraved on stone and metal, they are free from the process of tampering to which books and other documents written on perishable material are liable. Their value as contemporary documents thus remains unimpeachable.

The edicts of Asoke engraved upon rocks and pillars threw much lights on the history of those days. Other inscriptions, like that of Kharevala, king of Kalinga, of 165 B. C., of Rudradaman of the first century A. D., and of Samudra Gupta, told much of the development of those respective days. It must be noted that inscriptions were of two categories, one was official and the other was private. The eulogy by Harisena on the Pillars at Allahabad is a great literary and historical record in which have been recorded the achievements of Samudra Gupta, under whose patronage the court poets flourished. The Gupta emperor, who was a great unifying factor of his empire, remained hidden in the debris of history till the discovery and deciphering of the inscriptions by Harisena, was done, which narrated the history of the memorable reign of his master. These inscriptions, of thirty lines each in verse and prose are written in beautiful and superb style which made the author a rival of Kalidasa and other great writers of ancient India.

Another inscription of importance is by Vatsabhati, a poet, who wrote it in forty four stanzas to commemorate the construction of a temple at Mandasar. The Aihole inscription of Pulakesan II and that of king Vijoysena are remarkable literary documents of historical importance. The Meharauli inscription on iron pillar is also a good

piece of poetry in pure Sanskrit verse, describing the exploits and successes of Chandra. These inscriptions are either eulogies or narration of noble deeds performed by different ruling monarchs, with historical background along with the names of the presiding priests, engravers and the architects.

Another historical document is Banbhatt's *Harshacharit* which narrates in detail many of the incidents connected with the life of king Harshvardhana, under whose patronage the poet flourished. This book is very important as a prose romance in the historical literature of India. The incidents described in this book have been corroborated by Ywan Chawang, a Chinese traveller, who lived as a guest at the royal court. The book throws sufficient light on the social, political and intellectual conditions prevailing the period it covers. The state, at that time was a secular one and there was no religious persecution. *Buddhism* and *Brahminism* both existed side by side without any hindrance whatsoever. The *Harshacharit* was a landmark for literary and political chronology.

#### *Prose Literature.*

Prose as a literature has been in vogue since the *Vedic* age. The *Brahmins*, the *Puranas* and *Upanishads* were in prose. Many grammars, astronomy and other subjects were written in prose by different scholars of the day. Yaska wrote *Nirukta* in 700 B.C. in prose. The *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali was also another great work in this line. Dandin, a great Sanskrit writer of the Sixth-Seventh century is stated to have written three books of which *Kavyadarsh* and *Dasakumar Charit* are available at present. The authorship of other two books *Mrichhkatik* and *Avantisundari*, an incomplete text is also ascribed to his name. His *Kavyadarsha* is a fine specimen of art in poetry and *Dasakumar Charit* a prose romance. His literary skill has been very much appreciated by the scholars of many generations for his exact and clear expression and refraining from use of rhetorics in the language. The subject matter and diction of his books in prose elevated him to the position occupied by Kalidasa. His *Dasakumarcharita* or the Adventure of Ten Princes, though left incomplete, yet ranks among the masterpieces of Sanskrit literature. But according to Beni Prasad, the book is turgid rather than brilliant and is devoid of all systematic philosophy, though it paints a type of political activity which is often incidental to a monarchical court. Commenting on this work Macdonnell says that it is particularly interesting owing to the light it sheds on social life, especially the activity



of the dishonest classes, such as, vagabonds, thieves, gamblers and courtezans. The society portrayed in it was a corrupt one. As such, the narration is very difficult to follow and understand. The court was a place of intrigues where ends justified the means. Good administration based on political knowledge, education and integrity was completely lacking at that time. In both prose and verse, the writer eulogised sensual love and beauty of maidens in witty and humorous words. The author narrate about the ten princes, including Rajavahan, the hero, describing their personal experiences turn by turn, when they all were united after a long separation.

Another writer Subandhu, a contemporary of Bana wrote *Vasavadatta*, a story of love and romance of the young and beautiful daughter of king Sringarasakhara of the Seventh century A.D. The king arranged the marriage of his daughter with Pushpaketu, a Vidyadhara prince without her knowledge and consent, while the princess had lost her heart to Kandarpaketu the prince of Vatsa. Both the prince and the princess fled away to seek shelter in the Vindhya. *Vasavadatta* turned into a stone by the curse of a seer when she entered his *Ashram*. The young prince, thus losing his beloved was in utter despair but accidentally he touched a stone and found his beloved again. The structure of the story is overlaid with so much minute details that one is supposed to forget the main story while reading it. Subandhu was one of the best poets of India who gave not only adventurous stories but also displayed masterly skill of narration.

Bana, a court poet of Harshvardhana, the king of Kanauj, wrote *Kadambari*, a narrative romantic love story of a princess. But the untimely death of the poet left this great work incomplete. The task of completing the work was taken up by his illustrious son Bhushana Bhatta, who did full justice to it by imitating the ponderous style of his father. The poet excels in his imaginations by brilliant portrayal of the pictures of Ujjain thus making *Kadambari* a wealth of information, in matters of social custom and religious life, particularly of *Saivism*, which was a predominant faith during those days.

The story of *Kadambari* tells that Mahasveta, the young daughter Hamsa, the Gandharava king, was attracted towards Pundrika, son of Svetaketu. Pundrika was so much in contemplation of his love that he forgot himself and left this world. The maiden was extremely grieved but found consolation when told by a prophetic voice that she would certainly meet her man. Thus she began to live in a

hermitage on the bank of Achchoda Sarovar (Lake). Pundrika was born again as son of Shuknas, who was a minister in the court of Tarapida, the ruler of Ujjain and was named Vaisampayana. The king and queen had also a son named Chandrapid as old as Vaisampayana. They were brought up together and became great experts in the art of warfare and religious knowledge. One day both Chandrapid and Vaisampayana, accompanied by men-at-arms embarked upon hunting in distant places. Chandrapid alone reached the Sarovar where Mahasveta lived and there he fell ill. Mahasveta carried the young prince to Hemakuta hill where resided king Chitraratha. There the prince fell in love with Kadambari, the royal host princess. His stay was cut short and he went back to meet his companions who were in search after him. On an urgent summon from Ujjain he left the place leaving Vaisampayana at the Sarovar. Vaisampayana regained memory of his past life and made an approach to the hermit lady Mahasveta and thereby got a curse for his immoral act and was turned into a parrot. The maiden was reminded by her inner voice that she had removed her lover foolishly but she would get another opportunity to come near him. In the meantime Chandrapid came back to join his party but left the world finding that his friend had been dead. Kadambari wept and lamented on the death of her own paramour while her maid Patralekha committed suicide throwing herself into the waters of *Achchoda Sarovar*.

The parrot flew away but was caught by a Chandala woman, who brought the bird to Raja Shudraka. The bird relates the story of his previous birth. The story of Kadambari appears to have been taken from *Brhatakatha* of Gunadhya, which is not extant in complete form at present. The book does not advocate the divine rights of kings and ministers are shown advising the rulers with authority in the matters of statecrafts and administration. The *Kadambari* brought a great fame after the name of Bana which were commented upon by many later writers. Bana is stated to have written two other works, viz, *Parvati-parinaya* and *Chandisataka*, along with another play *Mukutataditaka* which also were of importance.

Ananda, a disciple of Vidyadhara, narrates the story of the two love-lorn souls in his book *Madhavanala-Kamakandala Katha*. The lovers suffer from pangs of separation for a long period but ultimately Raja Vikramaditya intervenes and they are married to each other. The work is written mainly in prose with some verses here and there.

Dhanapala, a *Jainist* by religion, wrote *Tilakamanjari* in imitation



of Bana's *Kadambari*. In this book also, love is the predominant theme and the affected souls were *Tilakamajari* and *Simraketu*. *Gadya Chintamani* of Udayadeva is another imitation of *Kadambari*.

*Champu.*

The origin of the word *Champu* is shrouded in obscurity. The works which fall in this category are in prose as well as poetry. This form was adopted by scholars for expression of their knowledge and erudition. Trivikrambhatta was the first writer who wrote *Nalachampu* or *Damayantikatha* in this fashion. The author was very proud of his work but he had not been admitted to the category of great poets. He wrote a novel *Madalasachampu* in which he told the story of Nala and Damayanti. Trivikrama flourished under the royal patronage of Indra III, a Rashtrakuta ruler.

Somadeva was another important writer who wrote *Yasastilaka-champu* under the patronage of Krishna Dev III of Rashtrakuta in 958 A.D. In it, the poet described the story of Raja Yashodhra of Avanti who being disgusted at the intrigues of the queen accepted the Jain faith and ultimately he was killed. The author extolled the Jain religion in the last three chapters of the book.

Harichandra wrote *Jivandhar Champu* in which were the reflections of *Uttarpurana* by Gunabhadra.

*Fables and Fairy Tales.*

The fables and tales occupy a very important place in the history of Indian literature. The old stories of secular themes are reflected in the *Jatakas* and *Avadana*. The origin of fables is found in the *Rig Veda* but its development took an independent line in course of time. These fables are a treasure-house of political and practical wisdom but not shorn of moral laws. These stories were the media of imparting useful knowledge to keep the youngsters away from the paths of vices and dishonour.

The *Panchatantra* is a wonderful work containing stories in five books written by Vishnu Sharma, specially for the sons of a monarch named Amritasakti of Mahilaropya. The princes were not at all disposed to study and were rather averse to it. The author in a very intelligent manner told traditional political and social maxims through the mouths of birds and beasts in the form of short stories of didactical nature. Each part of the book dealt with different subjects viz., *mitra-bheda*, *mitra-prapti*, *Samdhi-vigraha*, *Labdha-nasa* and *Apriksista-karitra* and they were work in simple prose with elegant style. The book

became so popular that it drew also the attention of foreigners and the Pahlavi version of 570 A. D. was later translated into Arabic, Syrian and in other European languages. Narayana's *Hitopdesha* was composed in the tenth century A.D. which was an abridged and modified version of the *Panchatantra*. These stories were full of humours revealing much of the social conditions of those days. The book is said to have been composed under the patronage of Raja Sudarshana of Patna for his sons to educate them in moral science.

Ghunadhya's *Brihatkatha*, though not extant in original form contained a long story stated to have been written in *Paisachi-bhasha*. It has not been possible to ascertain the date and locality of the work with precision. It was a wonderful piece of literature. The story of *Brihatkatha* centres around Naravahanadatta, son of the king of Udayana and the son's beloved Madana Manjuka. The prince was born at an auspicious circumstances. His newly married wife Manjuka fell a victim to Vidhyadhara, who carried her to his kingdom. The story further contained many adventurous feats of Naravahanadatta and of other fellow princes, who came to assist the aggrieved prince. The prince had other wives but at last he got back his lost one, after defeating Vidhyadhara in a battle. Sushil Kumar commenting on Ghunadhya's *Brihatkatha* writes : 'To judge, however, from the principal theme, stories and characters, as well as from the general method and outlook it is possible to assert that Ghunadhya must have been a master at weaving into his simple story of romantic adventure all the marvels of myths, magic and fairy tale as well as kaleidoscopic view of varied and well conceived characters and situations.'

Kshemendra wrote *Brihat-katha-Manjari* on the basis of the story of *Brihatkatha* with some additions. The main story has been given in concise and abridged form. The whole work consists of eighteen books and the incidents narrated by the author are remarkable for their excellent verse. But scholars have not very much appreciated the work, calling it to be dreary, rapid and without any inspiring zeal.

### Drama

The Drama occupies a unique place in the Sanskrit literature of ancient India. It had its origin in the *Vedas*. The hymns in dialogue between Sarama and Panis, Yama and Yami and Puraravas and Urvashi in the *Rig Veda*, may be taken as the dramatic elements in that great book. The play dealing with the marriage of Vishnu with Lakshmi, directed by Bharata before the gods, was a great dramatic performance. The uproar created by the demons on the occasion made Bharata to be



more careful and his next play *Amrit-Manthan* was performed in a play house where both gods and demons attended and participated together. The performance of the *Yajnas* in the Brahminical period had also in them some amount of dramatic elements. The priests entrusted with particular function with the observance of particular rules, in matters of construction and decoration of altars, had many dramatic features. Another source of drama, in ancient days, was the recitation of the *Epics* in public. According to Bharata Muni, who wrote in his *Natya-shastra* that *Brahma* derived prose from the *Rig Veda*, music from the *Sam Veda* and dramatic performance from the *Yajur Veda* and *Rasa* from the *Atharva Veda* and thus composed *Natya Veda*.

The performance of drama by the *Gandharvas* and *Apsaras* consisted of three kinds, viz, *Naritya*, *Natya* and *Nritta*. Two other styles the *Tandava* and *Lasya* were given by Shiva. The *Natya* included gesticulation and speech, the *Naritya* was gesticulation shorn of speech while *Nritta* was merely dancing. *Tandava* and *Lasya* were also branches of dance. *Tandava* was taught by Shiva to his disciple Tandu, while *Lasya* was instructed by Parvati to Usha who in turn taught this art to the *Gopis* and at last through them it came to the people of the country at large.

The *Natyasutras* were in existence during the time of Panini. Many books, on the technique and science of *Natakas* for the guidance of directors and actors were composed. The *Dasarupa* of Dhananjaya, the *Partaparudriya* and *Ekavali* of Vidyadhara, were the other treatises of repute on the subject. The dramatic compositions were divided into two kinds, *Rupaka* and *Uparupaka*. The former had ten species while the latter had eighteen.

Dancing and music were indispensable items in the *Nataka*.<sup>\*</sup> The art of moving the limbs of body and through them to express an idea must have originated in the early stage of human civilization. In ancient India music originated from the hymns of the *Sam Veda* which further developed in the love episode of Krishna and Gopikas. Brahma and Shiva both advised Bharata to incorporate dancing in staging drama. Thus drama in ancient India had been accepted as of *Divine* origin.

Though Bharata-Muni gave a systematic exposition of the dramatic doctrines in his *Natya-shastra* and later was quoted by many authors and dramatists, yet his work is not extant at present. The earliest work that is available is *Dasa-Rupaka* describing ten compositions of theatre. The *Saraswati Kanthabharana* a poetical and rhetorical work by Raja Bhoja deals with details of the art of drama comprehensively. The

*Kavya-Prakasha* by Manmata-Bhatta, in ten sections is authoritative work on rhetorics. The *Sahitya Darpan* also in ten sections which deals with the technicalities of the art of drama is a work of great repute. The *Sangita Ratnakara* is a work on music written by Saranga Deva, the grandson of Bhaskara, The *Kavyadarsa* by Dandin, *Kavyalankaravritti* by Vaman-Acharya and *Alankara-Kaustubha* by Karnapuraka, along with other works as *Bhoja Prabandha* and *Sarngdhara Paddhati*, convey the historical development of drama in ancient India. If *Natyashastra* is indispensable for the understanding of dramatic technique of ancient India, the *Natyadarpana* tells about the science of acting and performance. Thus the latter book became a very useful work in this field of literature.

The *Rupaka* has ten species, viz, *Prakarna*, *Bhana*, *Vyayoga*, *Samavaka*, *Dima*, *Ihamriga*, *Anka*, *Vithi*, *Prahansa*, etc, while *Upa-rupaka* has eighteen branches, viz, *Trotaka*, *Gosthi*, *Sattaka*, *Natyaraska*, *Prasthana*, *Ullapya*, *Kavya*, *Prinkbana*, *Rasaka*, *Sanapaka*, *Srigadita*, *Silpaka*, *Vilasika*, *Durmalika*, *Prakaranika*, *Hallisa*, etc. It is however to be mentioned that the principles of the unity of *Time* and *Place* did not draw much attention of the writers of drama of the ancient times.

In old days, dramas were generally played at the royal courts and pilgrim centres where only the Privileged class had access and as such it had no popular appeal. Moreover, the plays were mostly done in Sanskrit language, which was the language of the upper strata of the population. Then, with the development of *Prakrit* language during the ascendancy of *Buddhism* and *Jainism*, the dramatists began to incorporate the popular dialect into the dramas. It developed a sort of mixed language in a drama, where the kings and the heroes talked in Sanskrit language, while the inferior characters used other local dialects.

Bhasa was a great poet and has been called the father of the Indian drama. His work came to light when Ganapati Sastri discovered a palm leaf manuscript consisting of ten plays and a fragment of an eleventh one in Travancore in 1910. Later on, he found two more plays. Whether these plays were written by Bhasa or reproduced work of some unknown author has been a matter of great controversy among the scholars. It is an admitted fact that Kalidasa, Bana, Vakpati, Gaudhavaha, Bhamaka, Saradatanaya, Bhoja Deva, Jaya Deva etc, have extolled Bhasa as an eminent dramatist of all times. Writing about Bhasa's works, Rajashekhra in 900 A.D. says that in the fire of criticism *Svapna-Vasavadatta* alone, of all the dramas of Bhasa,



could not be burnt. Thus, Bhasa has been accorded an undisputable place on the galaxy of great men of letters.

Bhasa upheld the Brahminical doctrines in his works and recognised the supremacy of this class. His plays depicted pictures of the social conditions of the Fourth century B.C. He was a devout *Vaishnavite* Brahmin, who flourished in the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya. He was a great scholar, well versed in the *Vedas*, *Shastras*, the *Epics* and the *Puranas*. He has been described as a great humourist and enthologist. His plays covered a wide field with variety of characters describing vividly many aspects of nature and of human life. Though he was a born poet and a dramatist of high order, yet he was not considered to be a classical one. A.S.P. Ayyar, a commentator on Bhasa calls him a great immortal one like Shakespeare or Kalidasa. Comparing him with Kalidasa he writes that Bhasa was like the blue Jumna with its limpid waters, a delight to see and live in but powerless to kill disease germs. Kalidasa was like the dark, turbid, mysterious Ganges, perilous to bathe or sport in, but despite all its dirt, able to kill disease germs in the fraction of a second where these two rivers join in the most sacred spot in India, the Triveni. So, it is in the combination of Bhasa and Kalidasa that Indian drama will be seen at its best.

*Pratijna-Yaugandharayana* is a drama in six acts containing the story of the marriage of Vatsa king Udayana with Vasavadatta, daughter of Mahasena of Ujjayini. Udayana, while in hunting falls a prey into the hands of his enemy Pradyot Mahasena and is made a captive. But Udayana being a musician found favour at the court. He was engaged to give lessons on music to the royal princess. There developed a love between Udayana and the princess but they were helpless to pursue it. Yaugandharayana, the hero of the play makes an intrigue and as a result the pair of lovers escaped. At last the king gives his assent to this marriage and appreciates the efforts of the minister who proved to be very loyal to the king. The drama is a story of diplomacy in love. The minister Yaugandharayana was a man of courage who did never lose his pride and self respect even when caught by his enemy.

*Svapna-Vasavadatta* is a play in six acts. The dramatist is at his best in this drama. It is closely connected with *Pratijna-Yaugandharayan*, The minister was very keen in expanding the territories of his master by bringing Magadha under him and with this end in view, he arranged for a matrimonial alliance of his lord with Padmavati, a Magadhan

princess. But Vasavadatta, the queen stood in the way by refusing to agree with the plan. But the minister convinced the queen by taking her into confidence. The result was that the queen approved of the proposal keeping foremost the interest of the state before everything else. There occurred a separation between the king and the queen and the minister also disappeared from the scene. It was announced that both of them were perished in the fire.

At one time, Vasavadatta, the queen approached the princess with the proposal for marriage disguising herself as the sister of the crafty minister and the Magadhan king agreed to give the hand of his daughter to the king Udayana when learnt that the queen Vasavadatta had been dead long ago. Padmavati went to her new house but was sorry to find Udayana grief stricken with the memory of his wife. In the meantime, one day, Vasavadatta came to see Padmavati while they were asleep but she was utterly surprised to find her husband murmuring her name in grief. She tried to run away from the place but king had a glimpse of her. At last the king came to know of the whole plot and appreciated the diplomacy of his minister in high terms.

*Svapna-Vasavadatta* shows Bhasa at his best as compared to his other thirteen works. This play has been much appreciated by critics of all times. It is a drama of fine sentiments whose plot has been effectively devised, well measured and dignified in tone. Although there are moments of melodramatic situations, yet its treatments has been free from rants and rhetorics.

Another drama by Bhasa is *Charudatta*, a story of four acts, where a merchant Charudatta by name, falls in love with Vasantsena a young lady of exquisite beauty. A notorious villain Samsthana by name, chased Vasantsena and she ran into the house of Charudatta for shelter. Vasantsena left her ornaments with Charudatta but those were stolen away by Sajalaka, who happened to be a lover of a slave girl of Vasantsena. This unfortunate incident disheartened Charudatta but his devoted wife came to his help and gave away her own necklace of jewels to Vasantsena through Vidushaka. Vasantsena accepted the necklace and then went to meet Charudatta, the hero of the drama.

Another drama named *Madhyama-Vyayoga*, based on a story from Mahabharata, was written by Bhasa. It is the story of love between Bhima of the *Pandavas* and Hidimba, the demon. It was a case of love at the first sight. While saving a Brahmin boy from the clutches of this demon, Bhima himself fell a prey to her. This love led to their marriage and the birth of Ghatotkacha.



*Dutavakya* is an one act play of Vayayoga. The story is that Krishna goes to Daryodhan as a messenger of peace on the basis of division of the kingdom between the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas* and to create good will and harmony between the two warring camps. Krishna was not received well but was rather insulted. His anger was cooled down by Dhritarastra, the blind father of Daryodhana, who pacified this great emissary before he could control his arrogant son. The old king paid due homage to Krishna and thus the unhappy episode was over.

Abhisheka Nataka is a drama of six acts based on the *Ramayana*. This play presents the story of the death of Bali and the assistance Sugriva and Hanuman offered to Rama in fighting back Ravana, the king of Lanka. Hanuman goes to Lanka and meets Sita. Here Ravana is shown playing tricks of love and threat to win Sita's heart. Every effort of Ravana ends in failure and at last Rama inflicts a crushing defeat upon Ravana the king of Lanka. Then the re-union between Rama and Sita takes place. The victorious Rama returns to Ayodhya where his coronation takes place with due pomp and granduer.

*Protima* is a seven act drama on the life of Rama. Beginning from the exile to his return to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana. Rama is portrayed here as a man with less of passion and more of duty. The play is named *Protima* on the life of Bharat, who returning from his maternal uncle's home comes to know of his father's death and brothers exile when he happens to see his statue standing side by side with the earlier kings of Ayodhya in the hall, when his father was dead.

*Balacharita*, is a seven act play, with a story of Krishna, from his birth till he killed his maternal uncle, Kansa. The description of the play is extremely beautiful and much of human interest.

*Avimarak* describes the marriage of Kurangi, the daughter of Kunti Bhoja with the son of the king of Sauvira. Once Kurangi was going to be crushed falling under the feet of an elephant but was saved by a youngman of royal blood, who owing to a curse had been relegated a low caste. This relegated prince fell in love with Kurangi but he had to run away being detected by others of the court. His attempt to commit suicide also failed. He was given a magical ring by Vidyadhara through which he could see a vision of the princess without being seen by others. Narada came there and revealed the identity of the man.

*Panchratar* is a three act drama with more than one hero in it. It is an epic incident of *mahabharata*, where Dronacharya commands Daryodhana to give half of the kingdom to the *Pandavas*. He agrees conditionally that the *Pandavas* should approach him within five days for



this purpose. The *Pandavas* were in exile and it became a problem for their sympathisers to locate them. In the meantime news came that Kichak was Killed and Bhishma guessed that it was Bhim who only could kill him. The *Pandavas* were living in disguise and engaged in the service of Raja Virat. So they were traced out and Daryodhana was caught in his own snare, thus agreeing to the division of the kingdom against his own will.

*Karanbhara* is an one act play, in which the principle of unity of time and place has been adhered to. The story tells how Indra disguising as a Brahmin obtained the ear rings and weapons from Karna, who got them from Parsuram. Karna was deprived of the most valuable wealth of his life which made him powerless

*Urbhang* is a description in one act of the horrible fight between Bhim and Daryodhana. Daryodhana is defeated and crushed. Bhim avenged of the insult meted out to Draupadi at the open court of the Kauravas. The play has maintained the unity of time and place.

*Dut Ghatotkach* is a Vyayoga type drama, based on a story from the *Mahabharata*. Adhimanyu, the young Pandava was killed by Jaidrath a general of the *Kaurava* army. Arjuna took a vow to kill the murderer. Krishna sent Ghatotkach, a messenger to warn Dhritarastra about the impending destruction of the Kuru race. Ghatotkach was not paid any heed to but was showered with many insults. He returned back and reported the talks he had with the *Kauravas* and then a bloody war ensued.

Shudraka was stated to be a scholar and an author of repute, a few centuries before Kalidasa. He was a *Vedic* scholar and had immense knowledge of science. His play *Mrichchhakati* or *clay cart* combined melodrama and humour. Love and politics went side by side in his plays. *Mrichchhakati* narrates that Vasantseni, a young and beautiful woman fell in love with a man named Charudatta, a Brahmin by birth but it was not easy for the woman to reach the man of her choice. Samsthanaka, the brother-in-law of king Palaka stood in her way because he had evil eyes on her and planned to have her in his grip. The sex urge of the prince carried him to the door of the young maid. Finding no place of secured shelter the young maid reached Charudatta's house. She handed over to him all her ornaments for safe custody with a desire to make a link with that young Brahmin. On her request, Charudatta escorted her to her house.

Sarvalika, a paramour of Madanika committed a theft in the house of Charudatta and ran away with the ornaments of Vasantseni to bestow it to his beloved. Charudatta's good and benign wife gave



her costly necklace to Vasantseni through Vidushaka in place of her lost one. Vasantseni accepted the ornament with the intention of getting an opportunity of meeting her lover. Vasantseni knowing fully well that Sarvalaka stole away her ornaments from the house of Charudatta granted him to marry her maid Madanika with a blessing. After that Sarvalaka learnt that his friend Aryaka was in trouble and went to rescue him leaving his newly wedded bride in the custody of Vasantseni. Aryaka was put to prison by the king on the basis of a prophesy that he might succeed the king.

Vasantseni went to the house of Charudatta and was compelled to spend the night there on account of a storm. She offered to return the necklace but Charudatta's son wanted the replacement of his clay cart with one made of gold. Vasantseni took Charudatta's son Rohsiv to her house and filled the clay cart with ornaments advising him to purchase a golden one in exchange. In the meantime one day Charudatta went to a park, named Pushaprandak and there Vasantseni followed him. She got into a running chariot thinking that to be of Charudatta but fell into the hands of her enemy, the prince Samasthanaka before she could realise her mistake. Samasthanaka entreated her much to accept his hand of love but was met with a flat refusal. Being enraged he choked her almost to death but later on she was saved by a Buddhist monk, named Samvahak. Charudatta was taken as an accused before the court of Samasthanaka for the murder of Vasantseni and was sentenced to death. Even the efforts made by the mother of Vasantseni a prosecution witness to defend Charudatta failed because the trial was decided with an ulterior motive. But Charudatta was saved from the gallows when Vasantseni accompanied by the monk reached the scene of execution. After that Aryaka despatched the king Palak to the other world and took over the royal power in fulfilment of an old prophesy. Charudatta was given an honoured position. Samasthanaka was let off unconditionally at the advice of the noble Brahmin, the hero of the play.

Kalidasa, a great poet and a dramatist wrote several dramas under the royal patronage of Vikramaditya, a king of Parmar dynasty of Ujjain. The exact date of the period of Kalidasa has still remained in mystery and scholars have differences of opinion about it. In any case Kalidasa has been associated with the name of Vikramaditya, in whose court he was one of the nine gems. His dramas represented the cultural, social and intellectual conditions of his time, unsurpassed by any other dramatists. It has been recognised that Indian drama was in its best in the hands of Kalidasa. He showed equal brilliance as a poet,



as well as a dramatist. He became a forerunner of the literary achievements of India and was acclaimed by all men of letters throughout the world.

William. J. describes Kalidasa as Indian Shakespeare, while according to Alexander Von Humboldt, a German scholar, he is the celebrated author of *Sankuntala*, a masterly describer of the influence which nature exercises on the minds of lovers. Tenderness in expression of feeling and richness of creative fancy have assigned to him a lofty place among the poets of all nations. Karamzin was the first writer who introduced Kalidasa to Russia in 1792 and I. Robinovich writes about him :— I find Kalidasa as great as Homer. Both received their brush from the hands of nature and both portrayed nature.' He further says that Kalidasa was not just a poet of love, he was also a poet of struggle. The beauty and power of his poetry strikes a responsive chord in our heroic age, the age of national and social emancipation. He says that the Soviet scholars have shown that Kalidasa's works shook the stronghold of tyranny and weakened the authority of religion.

*Malavik-Agnimitra* is the first drama written by Kalidasa in his youth. This five acts play describes the love story of Agnimitra, the son of Pushyamitra and Malavika, the Vidarbha princess. His brother Madhavasena was captured by his cousin and she ran away for her life with a body of loyal men. After passing through troubles and tribulations, she got shelter in the palace of Agnimitra at Vidisa. Malavika, the young and beautiful princess remained disguised as a maid servant but her beauty caught the heart of Agnimitra. The fire of love defied opposition from the Maharani Dharini and when Agnimitra came to know that Malavika was a royal princess, he married her.

Pushyamitra was an Army General of the last Mauryan Emperor, Brihadratha, of India. He usurped the throne and established the rule of the Brahmin Sunga Dynasty after the decline of the Gupta rule. In this play Kalidasa has selected an historical figure as hero and made every effort to bring a re-union between the king and his beloved. The drama is historical because the personages actually lived in India and the hero and his father guided the destinies of India for a long time.

*Vikram-Urvasi* was another drama by Kalidasa before he brought out *Shakuntala*. In it he has depicted the love story of the Pururavas, the hero, a royal demi-god, and Urvasi, a celestial nymph. The story is based on a legend of the *Rig Veda* and the *Vishnu Purana*. Urvasi, the young and beautiful *apsara* in the court of Indra, fell into the clutches of



Keshak, a demon, who was mad with passion for her. The Pururavas rescued the young maiden and restored her to her own people. But in this process of this act he himself felt a spell of love towards her. Urvasi responded to his overtures and sent a letter to him through a friend of her. Ultimately Urvasi was united with Pururavas.

Bharat the dramatist organised a play in the heaven and Urvasi went there on a summon to perform the role of *Goddess Lakshmi*. While acting her role she fell into disfavour of the Muni, being absorbed by the thought of her mortal lover. She was cursed but by the intervention of Indra she was allowed to live with Pururava on the earth till the king had a child. Once Urvasi saw that her husband was playing with a young maiden with lustful eyes and the sight grieved her utmost hurting her tender feelings. In despair she retired to the Gandmadan Park and was transformed into a creeper. The king, in turn felt very lonely in absence of her beloved. He left the palace in search of her but luckily happened to grasp the creeper in the park. This re-union was followed by rejoicing at the palace. There he was surprised to find his son Ayus who was presented to him at the court by a hermit woman under whose care the prince was being brought up. Urvasi unfolded the secret telling the king of the whole story and admitting of having concealed the child in the interest of their re-union,

The king was very unhappy to know that his seeing the son would mean separation with Urvasi. He decided to abdicate and hand over the reign of the kingdom to his son in order to lead an escetic life. But the god of heaven informed him through Narada that his life with Urvasi would not be disturbed in case he helped them to fight back the demons. The dramatist has presented the story in an elegant style. Its thought is delicate and beautiful. In it the *Prakrit* language has been used richly in metrical code and structure.

*Shakuntala* is extant in four or five recensions, each in seven acts. Dushyanta, the king of Hastinapur, while hunting reached the precincts of Kanva's Ashram in pursuit of antelope. He happened to catch a glimpse of Shakuntala, the heroine of the play. She was strolling along with her two mates Anusuya and Priyambada. The king was extremely fascinated seeing the beauty of the *Ashram*. The king and Shakuntla both looked at each other and fell in love. On being informed that Shakuntala was the daughter of Visvamitra and Menaka and Kanva reared her up, he decided to marry the woman. The love at first sight ended in the union between the two in secret. Shakuntala received a signet ring from the king as a symbol of his love.



After some time Dushyanta went back to his capital and Shakuntala became dejected and felt love sick in absence of the king. At times, she lost herself in his thought. One day, the sage Durvasa, who was too well known for his haughtiness appeared in that *Ashram* and was not received well. This created anger in his mind. Shakuntala was completely lost in the world of love. Durvasa was not accorded with traditional courtesy of the *Ashram* and so being enraged he threw a curse at Shakuntala uttering :—‘Your lover will lose his memory about you unless he sees the ring again.’ Thus saying he left the *Ashram* in anger.

Shakuntala who had conceived after her union with the king reached the stage of maternity. Kanva came to know all about it through his spiritual voice. He decided to send Shakuntala to her royal house. On the way, while bathing, she lost her precious ring in a river. However, after an arduous labour she reached the palace and had audience with the king who failed to recognise her owing to the curse of Durvasa. Thus rejected and spurned by her husband, Shakuntala felt despondant with none to console her. In the midst of her worries she was picked up and flown away by a female figure Menaka, her own mother to *Hemakuta* where she gave birth to a child. There is turn in the play, when a fisherman in possession of the royal ring was brought to the court. On seeing the ring. Dushyanta got back his lost memory about his marriage with Shakuntala and had a longing to get back the *Ashram* beauty. Then Dushyanta went to help the gods against the demons and while coming back in the divine car with Matali, he happened to see a boy playing with a lion. The women of the *Hemakuta Ashram* were terror stricken. The king felt envious about the parents of the boy, and at last to his astonishment found that the brave boy was none but his own son. Shakuntala dressed in an ascetic garment appeared before the king who requested her to accompany him. Maricha, the saint of the *Ashram* blessed the re-union and told that the sorrows were due to the curse of Durvasa and the king was faultless. Then the king accompanied by Shakuntala and their son went to their own palace amid rejoicings of the people.

*Shakuntala* has been considered as a pearl studded like a star in the sky of literature. It revealed many aspects of those days, including the functioning of the government, the principles of succession and international trade. *Shakuntala* has been described by Goethe, as a flower of the youth and the fruit of the advanced age. The elevated position of *Shakuntala* could not be challenged by any drama or



dramatists of the East or West both. Kalidasa made Shakuntala, an *Ashramite* girl, a symbol of womanhood and purity thus making himself immortal along with that name.

Harsha, the king of Kanauj has been described to have been a great scholar, to whose authorship are ascribed three dramas of considerable merit. But some critics opine that the dramas, *Priyadarshika*, *Ratnavali* and *Nagananda* were actually written by scholars living under his patronage. It must be borne in mind that his court was adorned with Bana, Mayura and Divakara, who were great scholars of the age. Harsha himself was a man of great dramatic skill with vivacious and delicious gift of a dramatist. It cannot be doubted that he was an erudite scholar and was always surrounded by poets and literary persons of his time. I-Tsing, the Chinese traveller mentions Harsha, in his history of travels, as the writer of *Nagananda*. Moreover, many writers and poets who flourished after Harsha showered praises upon him, giving him an unshakable place in the literary world. Sushil Kumar Dey, writing about Harsha says:—Apart from the importance attached to him as a royal author and patron of authors, Harsha, claims place among the worthies of the period, not so much by any transcendent genius, but by a pleasing gift of delicate workmanship, conscious but not too studied, assured but not too ingenious.

*Priyadarshika*, a play of four acts, relates to the love story of Raja Vatsa and Priyadarshika, a young princess. The story runs that the king of Kalinga, once defeated Dridhavarman who ran away to a shelter for safety. His daughter Priyadarshika went into the home of Vindyaketu, an ally of his father. But Vindyaketu was also killed by Vijaysena, a general of Vatsa. The General took away Priyadarshika and presented her to his master. The queen Vasavadatta in course of time came to learn about the love of the king for Priyadarshika. She felt envious and managed to keep the girl away from the king's reach putting her behind the bars.

Priyadarshika committed suicide but in the meanwhile a messenger appeared with the news that her father Dridhavarman regained his kingdom after defeating the king of Kalinga. The messenger recognised the dead princess. Vatsa, the king had knowledge of magical power and with that he restored Priyadarshika to life again. At last Vasavadatta agreed to the marriage between the king and Priyadarshika with pleasure.

*Ratnavali* a play in four acts, portrays the love affair between the king Udayana and princess Ratnavali of Ceylon. Previous to Harsha, Bhasa already had dealt with the story of king Udayana in his two



plays. In this play, the crafty minister, Yaugandharayana played an important role. He conceived a plan to arrange the marriage of his master with the daughter of the king of Ceylon. On his machination the king of Ceylon agreed to hand over his daughter in marriage to the king of Vatsa on the assurance by the minister that the royal queen Vasavadatta had been perished with fire at Lavanaka.

The princess left her parental home to meet king Udayana, accompanied by the clever minister Yaugandharayana and Vasubhuti, a minister of her father's court. On the way the party met with an accident of shipwreck in the ocean. A merchant from Kausambi rescued her and presented to queen Vasavadatta. The princess Ratnavali then named as Sagarika, a woman of paragon beauty, became a liability for the queen, who was very afraid of being eclipsed by her. Then her attempts went on to keep Sagarika away from the attention of her husband. The spring festival gave an excuse for the princess to follow the queen, who was to go to worship the god *Kama* along with her husband. There the princess and the king exchanged glances and fell in love. The queen knowing about this incident began to feel very uneasy. She rebuked her husband not to fall a prey to the youth and beauty of Sagarika. Vidushaka returned and narrated the whole story of the disaster to the king. In the meantime Sagarika tried to commit suicide by fire. Getting this news, the king rushed to the spot like a mad man and found Sagarika unburnt. In the end, the king Vatsa married Ratnavali with the consent of Vasavadatta who came to know that Ratnavali was her cousin.

*Nagananda*, a five act play, based on the legends of the *Buddha*, was a different one from the other plays of Harsha. Jimutavahana, a prince of Vidyadharma, fell in love with Malayavati, the sister of Mitravas. Gouri told Malayavati in a dream that she would marry Jimutavahana, the prince. She related the dream to her friend but was overheard by the prince. The prince and the princess met through the untiring efforts of Vidushaka. The princess was carried to the *Ashram* where she was eager to see the face of her lover. The prince met her beloved with joy. Mitravas offered to unite them in a wedlock but the opposition came from the king. The princess tried to commit suicide but was escaped through the efforts of her friends. Ultimately she married Jimutavahana. After that once Jimutavahana happened to see a heap of bones of serpents which Garuda devoured to fill his appetite. The prince out of compassion offered himself for sacrifice in place of the serpents. Accordingly Garuda killed the prince but



afterwards regretted for his actions when told by a serpent, named Shankhchud about the whole situation. There was great disappointment in the royal family but Gouri appeared again as promised and gave life to the hero to be re-united with Malayavati. The dead bones of the snakes were alive and Garuda was debarred to swallow snakes any more.

Mahendra Vikrama Varma wrote a play, *Matta Vialsa*. The hero of the play was a Kapalin who bore a skull bowl. He was always intoxicated and sometimes lost his senses. In agony, he wanted to give up this way of life but his wife Devasoma did not want him to deviate from his path and was rather proud of the life they led. Begging for alms was their only means of livelihood. Kapalin lost his skull bowl and caught Sakya Bhikshu a Buddhist monk on suspicion. The monk was also accused of having enticing away Devasoma and Kapalin demanded punishment against this offence. Pasupati, who worked as an arbitrator for both the parties, failed to resolve the difference. A mad man snatched the skull from the clutches of a dog and showed it to Pasupati who guided him to hand it over to Kapalin. Kapalin got back his lost skull bowl and prayed for forgiveness. The monk in return gave a sermon on the Buddhist principles. This play was written in the first quarter of the Seventh century A. D. and was accepted as a good work eulogising the *Buddhist* faith.

Bhavabhuti stands as one of the great among the galaxy of dramatists and was accepted as second to Kalidasa. He probably flourished in the eighth century A. D. at the court of Yashovarman of Kanyakubja. He was well versed in the *Vedas* and in Brahminical literature and was a scholar in grammar, law and *Mimansa* etc. He was an orthodox Brahmin being a follower of the *Taittiriya* school of *Yajurveda*. He was a great critic of Rama whom he exposed for slaying a Sudra for violating *Dharma*. He even criticised Rama for his action in banishing Sita on false rumour which was irrational in his view. At the same time he admitted that a king must not disregard the sentiments of his subjects.

Bhavabhuti's plays occupy important place in literature and for that he stands as a great literary figure during those days. He was a worshipper of nature and a master of vocabulary with deep thought provoking ideas. His power of expression was vivid, rugged and grotesque. He used *Chhandas* and *alankaras*, as a great artist. As a poet, he was a replica of Kalidasa, who was his inspirer but his pen had no polish or technical finish. Everybody recognised his greatness as an

artist recognising his power of excellence which placed him very high.

*Mahavir-charit* was his first drama. In it, he described the story of Rama beginning from his marriage to his return to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana and his associates, in Lanka. He narrated the scene of the Svayambara ceremony where Rama broke into pieces the bow of *Shiva* and won Sita in presence of many mighty personalities of the day including Ravana. All the opponents of Rama got excited and insulted. Malayavat, the minister of Ravana planned to avenge this defeat of his master by bringing Parashurama and Rama face to face. Parashurama was a disciple and devotee of Shiva and his anger knew no limit when he came to know of the breaking of the divine bow. He felt that his preceptor had been put to shame by this act of Rama. The renowned *Brahmin* threw a challenge at Rama.

The elders, including the kings and the seers failed to pacify Parashurama and a direct combat between both the stalwarts became inevitable. Thus Parashurama, a hater of the Kshatriya race met with defeat at the hands of the young prince, Rama. The machination of Ravana and his friends did not end there. Malayavat the minister and Srupanakha; a sister of Ravana planned to create rift and dissention in the family of Rama. In his wandering life Rama was always accompanied by his faithful wife and brother Lakshman. Bharata who was very devoted to his elder brother agreed reluctantly to rule the kingdom in the name of Rama in his absence. Bharata met Rama in a Jungle and begged of him to return and rule the kingdom. He came back with a pair of sandals of his brother and placed them on the throne. Again Malayavat instigated Vali to fight against Rama but was killed by him. Before he died Vali asked his followers to accept the leadership of his brother Sugriva and Angad and help Rama to recover Sita who was taken away by Ravana to Lanka. Thus, there developed a friendship between Rama and the monkey chieftain. Malayavat was aggrieved at the failure of his plans. Hanuman brought ruination to Lanka and Trijata carried this news to the minister. Angad was sent as a messenger of peace, His talks with Ravana, though proved fruitless, yet they were of great interest. All the efforts of Rama to get back Sita without resorting to fight failed. Thus the battle ensued and in its fire Ravana and his family perished completely.

In the last act Rama accompanied by Sita, Lakshman, Hanuman and Sugriva returned to Ayodhya in a flying machine. On the way Rama explained to Sita all the important places associated with them



down below on the earth. This play had the reflection of Bhasa's *Balacharita* and *Abhishekha*. It did not get much appreciation from the critics, though it was a poem of great and noble deeds.

*Malti Madhava*, a play of ten acts, displayed the love and marriage of Malti, the daughter of Bhurivasu, a minister at the court of the king Padmavati and Madhava son of Devarata, a minister at the court of Vidharbha. The whole love episode was planned and watched by Kamandaki, a teacher of both the suitors. Bhurivasu desired to marry his daughter with Madhava, the son of his friend but his own king did not approve of the proposal. The king was interested that Malti should be given to his friend Nandana. Kamandaki arranged a meeting between Madhava and Malti in a festival. This meeting resulted in love within both the hearts. They again met in a temple.

Makrandh, a friend of Madhava saved Madayantika, a young and beautiful sister of Nandana who was after Malti, from the hands of a tiger. The young woman was enamoured by the bravery of Makrandh and was attracted towards him. Madhava became very dejected finding no way out to get his beloved, as the king was very adamant in his determination to marry Nandana with Malti. He resorted to the practice of *Tantra*, in a cemetery seeking help from the ghosts. He rushed to the Chamunda temple hearing a noise there but was surprised to find Malti there to be sacrificed at the altar by Aghorghanta and his wife Kapal Kundala. Madhava killed Aghorghanta and Malti went back to her house.

After that an intriguing marriage took place between Malti and Nandana. Makrandh disguised as a bride in place of Malti went to Nandana's house. Madayantika, being keen to meet her sister-in-law, went to find his lover lying on a cot to her utter surprise and satisfaction. Both Makrandh and Madayantika ran away to meet Malti and Madhava at the secret place where they were hiding in. Kapal Kundala who had sworn to avenge the death of her husband stole away Malti. Madhava seeing his efforts meeting with failure lost his heart and planned to give up this mortal world. Ultimately Saudamini came to his help by bringing Malti back and the king agreed to bless his marriage with Malti.

H. H. Wilson and others writing in the 'Theatre of the Hindus' comment on this play that it is free from the verbal quibbling and extravagances of combination, which the composition of the time of Bhoja offers, but it comes very near to them; although classical, it is highly laboured; although forcible, it is diffused and not unfrequently

obscure. It abounds in the most complicated prosody and is cited by Colebrooke for a specimen of the measure called *dandaka* or a verse of fifty-four syllables, and a stanza containing two hundred and sixteen lines. The play is remarkable for its beauty and language.

*Uttara-Ram-Charit*, a play in seven acts displayed the last part of the story of Rama. Bhavabhuti was at his best in this play. The plot is laid out harmoniously and with a tone of vigour.

Rama returned to Ayodhya with Sita after the defeat of Ravana, the demon king. After the coronation ceremony was over, the king Janak went back to his own kingdom and Sita felt sad after the departure of her father. Rama was engaged in consoling her and they went on visiting the paintings in which their early life had been portrayed. An idea cropped up in the mind of Sita to visit Bhagirathi and the hermitages during her exile. In the meantime Durmukh brought the news that the people doubted the chastity of Sita while she had been in the castles of Ravana. Rama with a view to fulfil Sita's desire to revisit the places of her exile, sent her with Lakshman. As a democratic king Rama was eager to listen to the criticism of his subjects.

Valmiki appeared at that stage with two brave children. While in Dandakaranya forest Rama had killed Sambuka. The spirit of that dead man carried Rama to Agastya *Ashram* where *Tamsa* and *Murla* two streams went on discussing that Sita gave birth to Lava and Kusha by jumping into the river Ganges and the river in turn handed over the boys to Valmiki for upbringing and training them up. Then Sita appeared as a spirit under the care of Tamsa. Rama failing to find her fainted. Sita brought him to senses but Rama made no response and left.

Kaushalya and Janaka met in a hermitage far away from the hustles and bustles of palace life. They were grieved and consoled each other at the exile of Sita. The two children of the *Ashram* of Valmiki caught hold of the horse of Rama undeterred by the mighty royal forces following it. Chandraketu, the son of Lakshman met Lava in a combat and both admired each other. The battle between the two youths was narrated by Vidyadhara and his wife. Rama ordered a cease fire without the knowledge that his forces were facing his own sons.

Bharta Muni arranged a drama and the *Apsaras* played the respective roles. The subject of the play is the life of Sita in exile. Sita fell into the Ganges but came out with Prithvi and the Ganges each with a newly born babe. Prithvi called Rama a cruel person devoid of any love for Sita. Sita had been advised by both to live for the boys and



take care of them in the Valmiki's *Ashram*. Seeing all these Rama fainted but in time Sita reached there along with Arundhuti. Sita brought Rama to senses and he got his sons with pleasure but found her consort leaving the world for good. The play has been acclaimed as a pure one without any conceits.

Bhatti Narayan wrote *Veni Samhar* and two other non-extant plays near about six hundred A. D. Bhatti was a resident of Kanauj but later left that place and migrated to Bengal. He was born in a Gaur Brahmin family and became a literary figure being honoured with the title of *Bhatt* and *Mrigraj*.

*Veni Samhar* is a drama, the story of which has been taken from the *Mahabharata*. The title of the play is closely associated with the dragging of Draupadi by her braid of long hair. The rules of dramatic structure have been strictly adhered to in this play. The story is that Draupadi was dragged by her by Dushyanta to the court of the king. She was despaired and took a vow not to resort to braiding of her hair till the insult meted out to her was fully avenged of and the culprits punished. Bhim, the iron man of the *Pandavas* declared that he would braid the hair of Draupadi with his hands full of blood of Daryodhana the *Kaurava* prince responsible for this mean insult after he sucked blood from his body.

One morning Bhanumati related a dream to an attendant that she saw Nakula, a hostile prince killing one hundred snakes. Taking that to be a bad omen, she foresaw the impending disaster for the *Kauravas*. Daryodhan tried to console his wife. On being told by the mother of Jayadrath that Arjun had taken a vow to kill her son, Daryodhan went in a chariot to the battle field. Dronacharya was the Commanding Officer on that day's battle. He was made to understand that his son Aswathaman was killed in the battle. When grief stricken, his weapon fell from his hand, he was put to death by the opponents. Karna showered aspersions against him doubting his sincerity and faithfulness. The son of Dronacharya did not take this challenge lying down. He blamed his father for his partiality for the *Pandavas*. In the meantime Dushasan had been killed and along with this sad news Daryodhan received the death news of Vrishasena, son of Karna. He further received a message written by Karna by his own blood for aid. Dhritarashtra and Gandhari accompanied by Samjaya arrived at the scene and urged upon their son to make peace with the *Pandavas*. Daryodhan was adamant and refused to listen to their counsel and himself went to the battle field hearing the news of Karna's death.

Charvaka, a demon, taking the garb of a seer went to Yudhisthira and told him a false story of the death of Bhim and Arjun in a battle against Duryodhan. Being lost in grief Yudhisthira and Draupadi decided to burn themselves when suddenly they met Bhim whose hands were full of blood. To the joy of all Bhim bounded the lock of hair of Draupadi thus fulfilling his earlier vow. At that time Krishna and Arjuna also reached there to divulge the false and concocted story circulated by Charvaka, who had already been slain.

This play is half poetical and half dramatic full of merits as well as of defects. It is an exciting story and appealing too, with vigorous flow and remarkable metrical beauty.

Vishakhadatta was a dramatist who wrote three plays but only two of them, viz *Devi Chandra Gupta* and *Mudra-Rakshasa* are extant. He was the son of Prithu and grandson of Vatesvardatta of the ninth century. His plays are historical shedding much light on the national events of India of the past. Though he was not of the calibre of Bhavabhuti or Kalidasa, yet he had mastery over the technique of dramatic beauty, fluency and freedom of style. His diction was forceful, admirable and direct and his works had greater conformity with the definition of the drama literature.

*Devi Chandra* is an historical play depicting the marriage between Chandra Gupta II and Dhruvadevi, the wife of his elder brother Ram Gupta. Ram Gupta was a coward at heart with no courage to meet the onslaughts of the Saka enemies. In order to maintain peace he even agreed to hand over his young and pretty wife Dhruvadevi, to a contemporary Saka ruler. Dhruva was a chaste woman and accepted her brother in law Chandra Gupta II as her husband in confidence. On his secret advice Dhruva agreed to the proposal of her husband to give her to a Saka king. Chandra Gupta disguised as Dhruvadevi went to the palace of the Saka prince and killed him. He later on put the weakling brother to the sword. Thus, Chandra Gupta II became the ruler of India and married Dhruvadevi who had been in love with him owing to his bravery.

*Mudra Rakshasa* is a political play, in which the hero was Chanakya; the Indian Machiavelli. Ends justify the means was the principle in his political dealings. He being the sworn enemy of the Nandas wanted to win over their minister Rakshasa to the side of his own master Chandra Gupta. Chanakya secured through his agents widening the differences between Malayketu and Rakshasa. Through



his machination Malayketu was given to understand that Rakshasa was in league with Chandra Gupta. Chandan Dass, a friend of Rakshasa had been condemned to death for giving shelter to the family of Rakshasa. Rakshasa purchased a piece of jewel from an agent of Chanakya without knowing the truth. This enraged Malayaketu and widened the gulf between him and his minister. He turned out Rakshasa, thus Chanakya's desires were fulfilled.

Chandan Dass went to the place of execution accompanied by his wife and children. Rakshasa reached there and met Chanakya and Chandra Gupta. Chanakya was successful in persuading the hostile minister of the Nandas to accept the post of a minister under the Maurya king. On the advice of his new minister Chandra Gupta ordered the release of Chandan Dass and the restoration of lands to Malayaketu who had been over powered by rebels.

This play is full of political intrigues. It has no beautiful thought. There is no woman as heroine and no eroticism and romanticism finds no place in this play. The assassination and fraud depict the low moral prevailing in that society. In it, the acts have been divided into scenes. Chandra Gupta looks like a puppet in the hands of Chanakya. The drama carries a good moral for the ruler and the ruled. Though not very much appreciated in the past, yet it has its position as one of the great dramas of Sanskrit literature. The dialogue in the play has been in Sanskrit language, in addition to Magadhi, Maharastri and Charuseni etc.

Murari, the author of *Anargha-Raghava*, a play of seven acts was the son of Shri Vardhamanaka and Tantumati. He lived at Mandhata on the bank of Mahismati in about 800 A. D. He was not a great dramatist because he was born at a time when drama was on the decline, yet his name belonged to the class of dramatists for his facile and graceful writings.

The play *Anargha-Raghava* narrates the story when Vishwamitter took Rama and Lakshaman to kill *Tadka*, a demoness, who had been disturbing the hermits living in the forest. Rama killed the witch, and accompanied the sage upto Mithila, in the court of Raja Janaka, where many princes gathered to attend the Svayambara ceremony of Sita. Ravana also had sent his envoy seeking for Sita, but he was refused. Rama broke the bow and had won Sita. Ravana thought of avenging of his defeat. At that time, Raja Dasharatha decided to abdicate the throne in favour of Rama. Sarupanakha disguised as Manthara advised Kaikeyi to secure the throne for her own son Bharat and fourteen years'

banishment for Rama in fulfilment of the two boons which the king had promised to Kaikeyi in the past.

Rama accompanied by Lakshman and Sita went to the forest. Sita was carried away by Ravana in the absence of both the brothers. The search for Sita went on and ultimately they came to learn that Ravana, the demon stole her away. With the assistance of Sugriva and Hanuman, Rama and Lakshman ultimately defeated Ravana and rescued Sita from the castle of Ravana in Lanka. At last they returned to Ayodhya and Rama was given the throne back by Bharata.

Rajshekhara was a Maharastrian poet who went to Kanauj to win favour and fame, is said to have been a tutor to Mahendrapal in the beginning of the tenth century. He wrote in *Karpura Manjari* that he was known as a *Bal Kavi* and *Kaviraj*. He was a noted scholar of Sanskrit and Pali both. Four dramas are ascribed to his authorship, viz, *Karpura Manjari*, *Bala Ramayana*, *Balabharati* and *Vidhasala Bhanjika*. It is reported that he also wrote two other dramas, viz, *Kavya Mimansa* and *Harvilas*. These plays were much appreciated on account of their correct diction and smooth verses in Sanskrit and Prakrit both.

*Karpura Manjari* was a drama in four acts written in Prarkrit describing the love story of Chandapila, a king of Kanauj and Karpura Manjari, the Kuntala princess. Through the efforts of a magician, the princess procured a job under the queen of Kanauj as an attendant. There grew a love between the king and the young maid. The queen when came to know of this development, she managed to put the maid into prison but the king went on visiting the woman in prison through a secret passage. In course of time the queen tracked the king and ultimately she consented to the wedding of the king with Karpura Manjari. Macdonell called this play as one of the best comedies in Indian literature.

*Vidhasala Bhanjika*, a drama in four acts based on the story of a king's love. The queen being disgusted with the behaviour of the king managed to get him married to a boy dressed as a girl. But the most funny part of the story was that the boy was a girl in reality, who was working at the court in disguise. Thus the queen was a victim of deception by her own action.

*Balaramayana*, in ten acts portrayed the *Svayambara* ceremony of Sita where Ravana himself was present. The coward Ravana had not the courage to participate in the competition. At his instigation Parashurama came on the scene. Ravana was deceived because he took



a statue of Sita taking it to be the real Sita. The heroic deeds of Rama formed the central part of the story. The drama was written in beautiful simple language and was much praised by critics and readers both.

*Balabharati* portrayed Draupadi's marriage with the Pandava princes who were forced to agree to the undressing of Draupadi at the court being outwitted in gambles by Duryodhana. It was not a play of having attained any noteworthy success.

Shaktibhadhar wrote *Ascharya Churamani* in the beginning of the 9th century. In this play he depicted the story of Rama. Rama and Lakshman fell in the trap laid out by Marich and left the hermitage. Ravana disguised as Rama taking a charioteer in the garb of Lakshman appeared before Sita and told her that Bharata was in trouble and they should go to Ayodhya immediately. Sita agreed to accompany Ravana disguised as Rama. Thus the demon king was successful in kidnapping Sita. Sarupnakha took the place of Sita but when found out was pardoned by Rama. The story included the episode where Sita even went into the blazing fire to prove her purity and chastity.

Damodar Mishra was a Court poet under the patronage of Bhoja in the tenth or eleventh century. Hanuman Nataka or Mahanataka has been ascribed to his pen but what is current is that Hanuman wrote it on the rocks. Valmiki pointed out to Hanuman that his own Ramayana would get eclipsed by the sweetish style of the Nataka. Hanuman the great warrior of the Rama army yielded to the pressure rather a request of the sage who asked him to throw away the verses engraved by him in the sea. These verses lay hidden in water for centuries until a merchant brought a copy of a couple of first stanzas of one verse as a present to the king. Bhoja himself goes to the sea shore and brought the whole matter and Damodar Mishra arranged and edited the play under instructions of the king.

Rama with Lakshman go to Mithila to enter into the field of competition in bending the bow of Shiva to win over Sita as his consort. Rama succeeds in breaking the bow and Parshurama the devotee of Shiva comes on the scene. After some dual Rama is acknowledged brave and superior in strength by the haughty Brahmin. Sita is married with Rama. The Natak is extant in two recensions one of Damodar Mishra in 14 acts and the other of Madhu Sudan Dass in 9 acts.

Khemisara or Kshemendra was a contemporary of Rajshekhar at the court of Mahipala who wrote two dramas *Naishadhananda* and *Chand Kausika*. *Naishadhananda* described the

story of Nala and Damayanti, a ballad of the *Mahabharata* in seven acts. The second play *Chand Kausika* dealt with the king Harishchandra, the embodiment of truth in mortal form. Once the king was given a curse by Vishwamitra, the sage, because the king objected to the burning of a damsel on fire. The irritation of the sage knew no bound. At last the king was pardoned when he abdicated his throne and paid 1000 gold mohars. The payment was made by selling out his wife and son to a Brahmin and himself became a custodian of a cemetery at Varanasi. His son died and the dead body was brought by his wife. The king as the custodian of the burning site demanded regular fees for the act. Thus the penniless woman was refused and she was at a loss to understand what could be done with the dead body of her son. Vishwamitra, the sage became very pleased at the truthfulness of Harishchandra and brought back the life of the child and returned his kingdom who handed it over to his son.

Dingnaga wrote *Kundmala*, a play, in 1000 A. D. The story of the play described the incident when Lakshman left pregnant Sita at the bank of the Ganges and Valmiki took her to his shelter. There Lava and Kush were born and they grew up receiving education under Valmiki's guidance. In the meantime Rama organised the *Ashwamedha Yagna*. On invitation Valmiki along with the other residents of his *Ashram* went to join it. Rama and Lakshman while strolling on the bank of the Gomti saw a floating necklace and that sight reminded them of the memory of Sita. Sita happened to see Rama from behind a bush and she was extremely dejected. *Tilotama*, an *Apsara*, in the guise of Sita grieved Rama with lamentation under instruction from Valmiki. Lava and Kush sang the Ramayana. The goddess of Earth proved beyond doubt the chastity and truthful life Sita led and thus brought re-union and pleasure to the family.

Bilhan wrote *Karnasundari* to mark the celebration of the marriage of Karnadeva Trailakyamalla the raja of Anhilvad (1064-1094) with Miyanalla Devi, the princess and daughter of Jayakesin the king of Karnata. The story runs that a king of the Chalukyas sees Karnasundari the daughter of a Vidyadhara king in a dream and longs to have her as his wife. The minister carries out intrigues and manages to bring the princess in his harem. The king has a soft corner of love for her, but the queen has a hatred. She wants to keep the king happy and for that she lothes herself as Karnasundari. Finding the king adamant to have the princess as his wife the queen plans the marriage of her husband with a boy in the guise of Karnasundari. The minister



coming to know of the real intention of the queen sends in Karnasundari instead of the boy thus thwarting the machination of the queen and bringing union between the king and his youth. The author is excellent in description due to his simple and lucid style as he has kept his drama free from monotonous rigmarole and bombastic pedantry.

Krishan Mittar the writer of Prabodha Chandrodaya or rise of the moon of knowledge an allegorical play in six acts, flourished in about 1100 A. D. during the reign of Kirti Varma. Advaita combining Vedanta and Vaishnavism find it as its defendant. As a matter of fact Vishnu cult has been glorified in it. Its philosophical verses are very impressive and convey the deep and thoughtful facts. The actors playing the roles of man and woman are symbolical as Vivek, mah, gyan, education, wisdom, dambha, shraddha and devotion. Thus the author makes it a beautiful drama requiring a bit of intelligence to understand it. Devotion and knowledge are prominently displayed in it. The dialogue is humorous.

Vatsraj a minister at the court of Parmardidev the ruler of Kalinjar who reigned in his realm from 1163-1203. He was a scholar and a politician and is stated to have written six plays Kiratarjuniya-Vyayoga, Karpurcharit, Hasyachudamani, Rukmaniharan, Tripurdah, and Samudar manthan. He has touched many rupakas in plays like Bhas. His language in the plays is beautiful and sweet.

*Jaideva* the author of Prasanraghav was a resident of Kundi Nagar in Vidarbha in 1200 A. D. In addition to Prasanraghav he wrote Chandarlok and Alankara. In Prasanraghav a play of seven acts Ravan becomes the laughing stock of the assembly when Sita is not attracted to Ravana but rather shows indifference towards him. Rama meets Sita strolling with her friends in a garden at Janakpura. Both feel attracted to each other and desire to meet again. Parashurama irritated on the breaking of the bow of his lord seeks quarrel with Rama followed by fight and submission of Parshurama to Rama. Rama and Sita go to exile when Sita is abducted by Ravana to Lanka. Rama is dejected and is acquainted with the life of Sita in the hands of the enemy by two Vidyadharas. Sita rejects the approaches of Ravana for her hand. Ravana full of anger makes an attempt to kill Sita but to his surprise he finds the head of his son Aksh in his hands. After inflicting a victory over Ravana Rama returns to Ayodhya by a Vimana flying in the air.

## SECTION VI

### SOCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

#### A. Legal Literature

The *Dharma Sutra*, though treated as the beginning of legal literature in India, yet actually they were not meant as codes for use in the Law Courts. According to Beni Prasad, they are manuals of conduct covering a wide range of human behaviour. They embody no real system of jurisprudence. They expressly recognise the utility of family, caste and local usage. Macdonell explains them a part of the *Vedic* literature, giving description of daily religious rites, purification penances, duties and rights of householders, Brahmins, kings, ascetics forest hermits besides discussions on cosmology and eschatology. The main idea is to represent *dharma i.e.*, duties of secular character. India of ancient period was, as a matter of fact, more spiritfuf under the shadows of Brahminical heirarchy. In the *Dharma Sutras* there has been *dharma* in three categories, viz, *Varna-dharma*, *Ashram-dharma* and *Naimitrika-dharma*. The nature of soul, metempsychosis and theory of retribution have also been discussed. The *vedas* are the sources of all ancient laws of the Indians.

Gautama is the oldest writer in *Sutra* style on this subject. He advocated the maintenance of the caste system and *Varnashram* in the Aryan life but necessity and exigencies are in his mind when he permits deviation from it. He shows no sympathy for the low born people, *i.e.* the *Sudras*, who were deprived of even handling religious books. The supremacy of the Brahmins has been advocated by him through out. The kings, the Kshatriyas and other classes must seek guidance from this priestly class. His principal work contains 28 chapters mainly prose, which passed through many changes and interpretations with the passage of time.

Baudhayana traces law to the *Vedas*. In his opinion *Smritis* and *Sistas* deal more with theory of government. The *Brahmanas* also had something to contribute in the line according to him. This *Sutra* comprises four *Prasanas* out of which the fourth seems to have been added later and the authenticity of the third has been challenged by many.



The first two are accepted but changes must have been made in them from time to time.

Apastamba wrote about law and government extensively. He is supposed to be born in the Southern India in 400 B.C. But many scholars have disputed that there is nothing tangible to substantiate from his writings that he belonged to the South. He was familiar with the people of *Kuru-Panchala* area and thus many persons advocate that he was a man of *Kuru-Panchala* side or its neighbourhood. Apastamba advocated a monarchical welfare state. He always urged strict adherence to moral rules. He also discussed *Smrata Dharma* making some passing reference to marriage and exogamy in his *Dharmasutra* whose style was not very brief and simple. His *Dharmasutras* on *Black Yajur Veda* maintained the supremacy of the Brahmins.

Vasistha in his *Vaistha-Dharma-Sutra* has recognised the accepted principles of society and government. He also advocated his own personal opinion, though in general followed the existing and traditional views, in connection with laws pertaining to society, peace, war and justice. His *Dharmasutras* were compiled both in prose and verse. The *Vishnu Dharmasutra* was of 169 verses having close identity with those in *Manusmriti* and it is stated that the writer was inspired to write from his own internal vision. The divine character of the *Sutra* has been recognised and the writer must have been a follower of the *Vishnu Cult*. Regarding this book, Ram Gopal says, 'In my humble opinion the *Vishnu Dharma Sastra* was from its very inception nothing but a mere rehearse of the earlier works on Dharma.'

The *Dharma-Sutras* are not extant but the subject matter contained in them has been collected and dealt with in *Dharmasastras* or in *Smritis*, based on social structure of the Aryans, from the early centuries till the beginning of the Christian era. Not being classed as revealed literature, they become the sources rather the fountain of Indian Law. There is no rigidity in them but on the contrary they bear reflection of customs and usages prevalent in ancient times. The materials scattered in the *Vedas* have been collected together in these manuals with further interpretations and explanations. The *Dharmasastra* was the child of the *Dharma Sutras*, affording a true representation of morals and ideal principles enunciated by the great scholars. As a matter of fact, the law of the society taking root in the *Sutras* found culmination in *Sastras*. Every *Dharmasastra* has its own *Dharma Sutra* as its basis. The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* also influenced the development of *Smritis* and other literatures on law. The *Dharmasastras* are also taken as of



divine origin and it finds acclamation as the original source of Aryan law. They were written by inspired seers for exclusive use of their pupils under their schooling. The subjects covered in them were social, religious and political including laws of administration and justice. What is called *Kalpa* has been elaborately dealt, embodying the precepts and obligations common to all.

Dealing with the progress of *Manusmriti* Dr. Ram Gopal writes:-- 'The process of social development went on and when the rules and customs embodied in the earlier Dharma Sutras were felt to be inadequate to cope with the changed circumstances, the later Dharma Sutras were composed. When it was again felt after sometime that the provisions in the Dharma Sutras fell short of the needs of the society, an enlarged and amended version of the earlier Dharma was formulated in the form of Manusmriti.' The authors of *Smritis* contributed to the legal literature not less than what was written by the compilers of the *Dharma Sutras*.

Manu was one of the greatest of seers who gave the Aryans a *Dharmasastra*, named as *Manusmriti*, which left a permanent value in the field of social, political and moral ethics. It is supposed to be one of the oldest and comprehensive writings greatly affecting the Aryan minds and also inspiring the later writers of *Dharmasastra*. In this work, Manu has placed the Brahmins at the highest rung while the *Sudras* are confronted with the utmost wretchedness and hardship of life. *Manusmriti* has been quoted by many later writers and also came under revision from time to time. Scholars like Medhatithi, Govindaraja and Kulluka enriched the subject of law through their commentaries on *Manusmriti*. *Manusmriti* or *Manav Dharma* is divided into twelve parts dealing with creation, law, duties, the man in society, the fate of man after death and the ultimate reality etc. It also deals with philosophy of life and other social problems. In matters of politics, it advocated kingship which was of divine origin according to Manu. It gave a clear picture of contemporary economy, social culture and political conditions of the country. It proved to be an indispensable work for the Indians of all times providing continuity and vitality enabling them to face catastrophes as a social and cultural unit. The *Manav Dharma* is a non-sectarian work for application on universal basis. It has influenced the social structure of foreign nations in South-East Asia, Burma, Cambodia and Indonesia.

*Vishnu Smriti* is based on what Manu taught in his *Dharmasastra*. It is a manual for society as well as for the kings. In it the *Sudras* have



been allowed to practise any art for their occupation. The work is in prose and there are some verses also where Vishnu discusses with the Earth. Its revelation has been ascribed to Vishnu and is said to have been compiled by someone of the *Vaishnavite* faith.

Yajnavalkya of Mithila, was another law giver who wrote *Smriti* in a very systematic manner like Manu and with greater precision and stringency. His *Smriti* comprehended the subject in a very wide way and thus he occupied a unique and popular position in the judicial hierarchy of ancient times. He had complete faith in the *Vedas* and in other allied literature. He dealt with the relation of the king with his subjects and with other matters concerning the administration of the country. Human conduct, social law and penance have been discussed in three chapters. The knowledge of self was an additional subject which Yajnavalkya dealt with in great details along with other matters viz, about the planets, metal plates about deeds of lands and monastic life. His was an advance over Manu regarding ethical laws.

Narada was also a great authority in law though he was not an original law giver. He emphasised more on written and documentary proofs than Manu. The whole course of human life was touched by him in 132 titles for the guidance of mankind. When this work ascribed to Narada was written cannot be traced with certainty. Macdonell opines that it might have been not before fourth century A.D., while Kane puts it between 100 and 400 A.D. basing on *Persian Dinara*.

Brihaspati explained law particularly in his *Smriti* which he is stated to have composed between 300 and 500 A.D. according to Kane. But Jolly, places its composition during the period between sixth and seventh century. His work had a closer relation with *Manusmriti* but it had a new revolutionary development in the system of *Sati*. He advocated a fourfold division of Courts. He said that mere laws should not be the only basis of decision but examination of circumstances must be given due consideration to. He laid more stress upon the observance of the status of the accused and the nature of the crime. His *Smriti* is obtainable in fragmentary state and appears to be a commentary on man's work.

Parasara, a seer of the olden time and believed to be a son of Vasistha, admitted that law of the past should not be enforced at present. The changes that occurred in the circumstances and customs must be observed and followed by a responsive change in law. In his opinion the

king of the land was the final authority in framing of the laws but above him were the Brahmins.

### B. Arthasastra

*Arthasastra* was the science of economics and politics of the ancient Indians. *Trivarga*, i.e., *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* considered to be the chief pursuits of human life. *Arthasastra* dealt with property, wealth, practical arts, administration and political life of the country. The *Dharma* was in the supreme control of the Brahmins and to keep their supremacy they treated *Arthasastra* as *Upaveda* of the *Rig Veda*.

Brihaspati is known to have been the originator of the science of *Arthasastra* but his text was not available. It is the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya that is extant. Its origin dates back to the golden rule of Chandra Gupta, whose worthy minister was Chanakya, whose name the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya runs. It was always a matter of speculation if Kautilya, the author of *Arthasastra* was Chanakya or different literary figure. The predominant belief was that Chanakya was Kautilya and it was he, who brought much success by his own politics to the reign of Chandra Gupta, the founder of the Maurya rule in India.

Kautilya has been compared with Machiavelli the Italian thinker of the early modern time. Both of them advocated principles which were based on shrewdness and diplomacy. It was end that justified the means. War was the criterion of the stronger, while peace was for the weaker. Kautilya's *Arthasastra* dealt with many things, including architecture, mining, science of war and peace and with other matters of social, economic and political interest. It was a guide for the monarchs to acquire more lands and new empires. All the administrative aspects from the education of the prince to the attainment of full knowledge of ruling his own subjects, have been discussed in it. The *Arthasastra* drew the attention of all great poets, scholars and writers of ancient India, who threw much light on the intellectual attainment of the people of that time. Varieties of topics, viz, bad or good omens resulting to the voices of animals and birds, witchcraft, fortune telling, jocular literature etc, all can be traced in the *Arthasastra*. The work is in the fifteen *Adhikaranas*, with an addition of one hundred and eighty *Prakaranas*. It is further divided into many chapters with summary.

*Kamandakis Nitisara* was another work of this type in verse, which the author admitted to have been an imitation of Kautilya's *Arthasastra*.

### C. Kamasashtra

*Kamasashtra* deals with *Kama*, which is another important aspect of human life. This literature has enunciated and developed the doctrine of love. The Indian law givers were always very outspoken in all human



problems throughout the ages. Thus the question of sex did not escape their notice and early scholars and writers wrote much on the subject. Kama means desire and fulfilment of pleasure both sexual and otherwise. Thus *Kamasastra* is stated to have been composed for the first time in 500 chapters by Svetaketu, son of Udalaka. His work was based on Nandi's treatise on *Kama*. Nandi was the divine charger of *Lord Shiva*. His treatise was very comprehensive to be within the understanding of human beings. Nandi also dealt with the three major objects of life, *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* which were originally written by Brahma. These subjects were commented upon in a systematic manner by Babhravya a Panchali Pandit. After him came many elaborators and editors on each of these subjects and they were, Dattakacharya, Charyana, Suvarnanabha, Ghotamukha, Gonardiya, Gonikaputra and Kuchumara. The seven classes of *Kama* in the *Sastra* of Babhravya are 1. General. 2. Sexual union 3. Courtship, 4. Married love 5. Love out of wedlock. 6. Venal love. 7. Secret instructions.

Of all these writings, there exists only one book *Kamasutra* of Mallanaga Vatsyayana, which was written on the model of Kautilya's *Arthasastra*. Kautilya wrote for the kings and their ministers but *Kama-Sutra* was for the use of men and women of all societies right from the king to the man in the street. The work is comprehensive one, in which the manners and social customs have been revealed in details. It was written not in *Sutra* nor in *Bhasya* style but had a style between the two. The *Kamasutra* has seven sections each dealing with different aspects of human life as a social being, the first is general in character while in the second the object and explanation of *Kama*, *Artha* and *Dharma* are given. The third describes courting of men and women resulting in the three forms of marriages, *Gandharva*, *Paisacha*, and *Rakshasa*.

The fourth explains the development of relation with women who are married and the fifth deals with relation with women who are married to others. The sixth gives description of love with courtezans. The last section tells of the secret ways how to succeed in securing the hand of the beloved.

Vatsayana has enumerated sixty four arts, as subsidiary branches of this science specially meant for use by women along with sixty forms of entreating. The list includes all matters required for the enjoyment of life from the physical point of view. The scope of this work was very wide. All the fine arts, crafts including racial and cultural developments find explanation in it. That is why it is called the science of eugenics, i.e. of race culture. It contains vivid description



and instructions in details on erotic technique, charms and aphrodisiac for sexual satisfaction of both husband and wife. Vatsayana gives details how the man should bring her newly married wife and have intercourse with her in a scientific way. He was himself a great saint and this science came out as a revealed truth to him.

P. Thomas says, 'The knowledge of Vatsayana was considered essential for artists, poets and sculptors, for kings and nobles, and ladies of the fashion. Courtezans who aspired to fame assiduously studied Kamasutra. The nobles and the learned having set the fashion, the middle classes soon followed suit and Vatsayana became a by word in India for everything erotic. Thus his *Sutra* was of an inestimable intrinsic value built on scientific lines. According to ancient Rishis of India a physician without the knowledge of herbs, an accountant without the knowledge of Arithmetic and a married person without the knowledge of Kamasutra are creatures of no worth.

Koka Pandit reputed for his work *Rati Rahasya* of eleventh century A. D. stands next to Vatsayana in this field of literature. *Rati Rahasya* is divided into ten chapters which contain altogether eight hundred verses. There are many things in it which cannot be found in Vatsayana's *Sutra*.

#### D. Grammar

The science of language, the grammar, developed along with the study and recitation of the *Vedic* hymns. Indra was considered to be the first traditional grammarian who gave definite shape to the science of language in the form of *Indar Tantar* which was said to have been twenty five times as big as Panini's grammar. Indra was followed by Vayu, Bhardwaj, Bhaguri, Paushkarsadi Charayan, Kashkritsan—Vyagrapadya, Madhyandini Rauri, Shaunki, Gautam, Vyadhi, who all contributed to the development of grammar.

Though much light could not be thrown on the subject of grammar in ancient India, yet it was recognised that *pratisakhyas* and *sikshas* were grammatical works of high merit. The *Brahmanas*, the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*, including Yaska's *Nirukta* contained many rules of grammar for the purpose of keeping the sacredness of the *Vedic* literature from being degenerated into the hands of the illiterates. In spite of all these, there was found nothing in concrete record on the subject, till the work of Panini who stands as a great grammarian of ancient India. Panini's earliest works were *Ashtadhyayi*, *Shabdanushasana* and *Britisutar*, the grammar of contemporary spoken language. The *Ashtadhyayi* affords an exhaustive investigation of the roots of Sanskrit language and of the formation of words. It contains



4000 *sutras* in eight chapters. There are two appendices as *Dhatupatha*, the list of verbal roots and *Ganapatha*, the list of word groups. Panini taught what was nearer to the prose of the *Brahmanas* than the classical Sanskrit literature. He divided the existing contemporary literature into five sections, *Drisht*, *Praukat*, *Upgyat*, *Krit* and *Vyakhyan* with many subdivisions.

Panini mentioned in his work about sixty four early writers who worked for the development of grammar before him and particularly the names of the following scholars, viz, Aapishali, Kashyap, Gargya, Galab, Chakarvarman, Bhardwaj, Shaktyan, Shakalya, Sainak and Shaphatayan. His work has been acclaimed and appreciated by literary men of all lands. No scholar has given such exposition in outlining the science of language at such an early period of history. His other works were *Shiksha*, *Jambbativijay*, or *Patalvijay* and *Dwirupkosh Shiksha* dealing with sounding of words in *sutra* style.

Panini is said to have been a resident of Salatura, near present Attock in West Pakistan and flourished in near about 500 B. C. He has been honoured with many names by the later commentators. He has been called *Panina*, *Dakshiputar*, *Shalanki*, *Shalaturiya* and *Ahik*. He was a scholar of exceptional merit, whose works have commanded admiration of all and served as a basis of the grammatical researches done through many centuries.

Acharya Vyadhi wrote a book *Sangreh* which had relation with the subjects of Panini. His work has been referred to in many later writings like *Kaushika Vriti*, *Bhashi Vriti*, *Nyas*, *Mahabhashya Pradeep*, *Padamanjari* and *Yogvyasbhashya*. The *Sangreh* was written in *sutra* form in both prose and verse. Many scholars, including Bhartrihari quoted couplets from this book in support of their contentions which they wrote. Samudra Gupta the mighty ruler of Gupta India, referred him in *Krishna Charit*. Vyadhi has been mentioned as Dakshyan the writer of *Sangreh* in *Mahabhashya*. He has been said to be the brother of Dakshi, mother of Panini.

Some of the earliest interpretations of the works of Panini have come down to the present time. *Paribhashas* is one of them in which single rules have been explained, like that of the *Varttikas* of Katyayana. With the passage of time many old forms gave place to new and Katyayana was one of them, who made amendments and changes in the forms enunciated by Panini. Katyayana criticised the rules framed by his great predecessors in the spirit of a scholar. His main concern was to make correction where it was necessary without any



obsession. His *Kartikpath* was considered to be a part of Panini's *Vyakaran* which stood incomplete without it and but it formed the basis of *Mahabhashya* written by Patanjali. Varruchi Katyayana was a resident of Southern India and lived in the third century B. C. He was the grandson of Yajnavalkya and son of Katyayana and was the writer of famous *Kartik* on *Ashtadhyayi*. Although his work was not found in complete form, yet it had been referred by Patanjali and other later *Acharyas*. Patanjali mentioned him as Bhagwan and this very fact shows the place Varruchi Katyayana occupied in the field of language. He wrote several other books viz, *Swargarahan Kavya*, *Bhrajsangyak Sholak*, *Smriti* and *Ubhyasarika*.

Besides Katyayana, there were many other scholars who wrote grammar and became famous as *Varttik* writers. They were Bhardwaj, Sunag, Krstha, Vyaghr Bhuti and Vyaghr Padya, In *Mahabhashya* are mentioned of a few *Vyakarana Acharyas* who were predecessors of Patanjali. They were Gonardiya, Gonikaputar. Sourya Bhagwan, Karuna Badhab and Bhawant. The *Varttikas* also came under the comments of Hela Raj, Raghbasu and Rajrudar. Nagoji Bhatta wrote certain rules for the interpretation of *Ashtadhyayi* in his *Paribhasendusekhara*.

Patanjali, wrote *Mahabhashaya*, the great commentary dealing with *Varttikas* of Katyayana and criticism of the rules of Panini. His language of *Mahabhashya* was not difficult to understand and its arrangement of topics were excellent. The author presented the difficult subject of grammar in a very simple and sweet manner. It was a great book in which all the changes in the language after Panini had been incorporated. The book particularly extolled and praised some *Sutras* of Panini which had been rejected outright by Katyayana. In some cases he supported the stand of Katyayana against views of Panini. Thus he stood midway between the two grammarians. His *Mahabhashya* was not only a commentary on Panini and Katyayana but it was the last complete work on grammar. Like Katyayana he was nearer to classical Sanskrit literature, because he also omitted many forms and rules pertaining to the *Vedic* literature. Thus with him came to end the development of Sanskrit grammar, as the later writers all elaborated and commented upon the sutras that Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali contributed to the field of literature.

Patanjali also wrote *Samvediya Nidansutar* and *Yogsutar*. He had contribution to *Charak Samhita* and *Yogadarshan*. His *Samved* had a Patanjali Shakha. His *Mahabhashya* was commented upon by



Bhartri Hari, Agyat Kirtak, Kaiyat, Jyesht Kalash, Maitrey Rakshit, Purushotam Dev, Ghaneshwar, Shesh Narayan and others.

Bhartrihari was a philosopher and grammarian both, flourishing in the first half of the seventh century. He wrote *Vakyapadiya* in three parts, dealing with grammar in metrical form. The other works attributed to him were *Mahabhashya Deepika* and *Smankirtak*. The *Mahabhashya Deepika* is a complete commentary which had been quoted by many later writers.

The *Mahabhashya Pradeep* of Kaiyat was an important commentary on *Mahabhashya*. It was in turn commented upon by many writers, viz, Chintamani, Naganath, Ramchandar Saraswati, Iswara Nand, Anambhatt, Narayan Shastri, Nagesh Bhatt, Malay Yajwa. Ram Sewak, Prabratkupadhyaya, Adden, Narayan and others.

*Vrittis* on *Ashtadhyayi* were written by many old scholars. In addition to Panini who elaborated the *sutras* in the form of *Vrittis* were Kuni, Mathur, Shwobhuti Varruchi, Dev Nandi, Durvncet, Chuli Bhatti, Nirloor, Churni, Jayaditya and Vaman. Jayaditya wrote *Vritti kasika* on *Mahabhasha*, one of the earliest ones after that of Patanjali and Bhartrihari. The *Kasika* was a joint work, as Jayaditya, left it incomplete in four parts. It was Vaman who gave it the definite and finished form, but I-Tsing mentioned Jayaditya as its only author. This book was very popular among the *Buddhist* scholars of Sanskrit language, particularly those who came from foreign lands. The *Kasika* had a commentary on it in *Kasika Vivaran Panjika* by Jinendrabbuddhi.

In the beginning of the Christian era, an attempt was made to give an independent system of grammar in *Katantra* by Srvavarman but he could not be said to have been successful in making it free from influences of Panini. The *Chandra Vyakaran* by Chandra Gomin and *Sakatayana-Vyakarana* by Sakatayana were the other important works on grammar. The former was written in 600 A.D. in *sutras* of Panini and Patanjali and was very popular in the northern hilly countries and Ceylon. The latter's *Vyakaran* was the outcome of the study of great grammarians' works viz. of Panini, Patanjali by the author of the book. Hem Chandra wrote grammar on the life of Sakatayana for the Jaina faith having shorn it off the *Vedic* influence. Thus there developed several grammatical schools, with their peculiar terminology and grammatical literature which attained to a most remarkable height. Grammar as a science of language made rapid progress and great grammarians enriched its literature by their unceasing contribution throughout the ages.



### E. Lexicography

*Lexicography*, is the second branch of the science of language. The *Vedic Nighantus* confined only to the elucidation of the *Vedic* hymns. They contained verbs as well as nouns, necessitated from the practical point of view for a particular purpose. The development of Sanskrit dictionary came at a very later stage. The *Dhatupathas* and the *Ganapathas* in prose and verse gave the list of roots and word groups respectively. When dictionaries known as *Kosas* were written, it contained explanation of words and their importance. The *Kosa* had no limitation of subject and it embraced astronomy and other allied literary matters. The two classes of dictionaries *synonymous* and *homonymous* were in verse for the use of poets and men of literature. In the *synonymous* were arranged words having the same meaning according to subject while in *homonymous* was an arrangement of words not confined to one meaning.

The dictionaries were not in order of alphabets as the object was not for the reference but for learning. As a matter of fact, no specified rules were observed in the compilation of such works as was done in later days on scientific lines. The *Kosas* were compiled at the earliest period of history but they were not complete and easy in form. The earliest recorded *Kosa* is of Amara's *Namalinganusena*, known as *Amarkosa*. Like Panini, he stood, occupying a high ranking and dominating position in Lexicography. Amara Simha admitted in his book of the *Tantras* of his predecessors which inspired him to undertake the compilation of *Kosa*. Even from the commentators of his book, it could be ascertained that Amar Simha had his predecessors, viz, Vyadi, Dhanvantri, Vara-ruchi, Katyayana, and Vachaspati with established name and fame. But Amara outshined all of them by his outstanding contribution in the field of literary development. By religion, he was a *Buddhist* but of moderate bias. His work embraced *Buddhist* as well as the *Vedic* vocabulary. The *Amarkosa* was a dictionary of synonym in three sections, including a homonymous section in his main work.

Purushotama Deva supplemented the *Kosa* of Amara by *Trikandasesa* which was an important work of great merit. He also wrote a book named *Haravali*, which was considered a rare creation. Besides Amara Simha, this branch of science drew many other promoters and lexicographers. Satvata said to be a contemporary of Amara wrote *Anekaratha Sumuchya*. *Abhidhana-ratna-mala* written by Halayudha in 950 A.D. was another masterpiece. The *Vaijayanti* of Yadava Parkasha was a very voluminous work giving words divided in syllables, gender and initial letters.



### F. Metrics

The poetics of the ancients comprising of metre, rhetoric and prosody were also considered as branches of the science of language. Pingala was said to have begun the measure of metrical line with the assistance of *Trikas* or the eight groups of three letters each. Before him number of letters in each line of the stanza were a distinguishing factor of metres from others. These metres were used in the *Brahmanas*, *Sankhyayana Srauta Sutra*, *Rig Vedic Pratisakhya*, *Rig Vedic Anukramonika* and in the *Yajurveda* of Katyayana.

The *Chhanda Sutra* of Pingala dealt with the metres of the *Vedas*. *Varna Sangita* was the basis of classical Sanskrit metres. It was based on sound variation which was different from *Svara Sangita* of the *Vedas* and *Tala Sangita* of *Apabhramsa* metres. Pingala's work was placed in the *Vedanga* section because it was a work of *post-Vedic* period dealing with prosody for which it was acclaimed to be an authoritative work. Many scholars commented on Pingala's work and the most conspicuous and important among them was Halayudhat.

Kalidasa is also reported to have written a small book on common metre in *Srutabodha*. Bharata wrote *Natyasastra* and devoted two chapters to the explanation of metres in it. He differed from Pingala regarding the definition of metre. Pingala made a use of *sutra* in defining metre in a full stanza composed in the same metre without any illustration. Bharata defined a metre supporting it with illustrations.

Varahamihira used classical Sanskrit metres in his *Brihat Samhita* and discussed this metre in his book *Brihaj-Jataka*, in one full chapter. The metres of classical Sanskrit literature were more artificial and elaborate shedding lustre and beauty more than their *Vedic* originals. The *Vrittajatisamuchchaya* of Virahanka was another metrical work in Sanskrit and Prakrit, both, shorn off the *Vedic* metres.

### G. Poetics

The poetry of pre-classical period was not guided by any poetical rules. They were the outflows of inspired ideas, in language of the minds of the ancients. It was a free product of the exuberance of the human feeling. But classical poetry was not so free as the *Vedic* one. It was under the strict observance of certain rules enunciated by critical scholars of the period. By this process, poetry became more musical, beautiful and scientific in its art.

The earliest attempt in the science of poetics was reported to have been made by Bhatti in his explanation of *Alankaras* in his *Ravan-Vadha*. There grew up several schools of critics of poetics.

Dandin in the seventh century A.D. brought out *Kavyadarsa* in prose and *Alankarshastra* a very renowned work in verse. According to him *Alankar* made poetry more beautiful and sweet. He adopted the *Vaidarbha* and *Gauda* style as the predominant trait of his works.

Bhamaha's *Kavyalankara* also exercised a great influence on latter writings like *Kavyadarsa* of Dandin. He counted ten defects describing grammatical and logical mistakes in poetry. He laid great stress on figures as indispensable to *Kavya*. In fact Bhamaha gave a finishing touch to what Dandin propounded. He propounded another idea in *Rita*, the soul of poetry, in place of Dandin's *marga*. His emphasis was more on qualities than figures in poem. In his *Kavyalankarasuttravritti* he ruled out the view that *Alankara* was the soul of poetics advocated by others.

Udbhata was the most powerful exponent of *Alankara* school in the later half of eighth century. He was a contemporary of Bhamaha and mentioned forty one figures in 79 verses in his *Alankara-Samgraha*. He enunciated some new doctrines of elaboration called *Upamas*. He paid no attention to Dandin's style but brought out his own in the use of three *Vrittis*, i. e., manners. He was a renowned poet and his literary achievements overshadowed Bhamaha, who was his predecessor.

Rudrata was another writer of the *Alankara* school, who wrote *Kavyalankara* containing sixteen chapters of seven hundred and thirty four verses between 800-850 A. D. His division of figures were based on sound and senses. He dealt with *Rasa* and *Ritti* ignoring *Gunas*. He dealt with figures more systematically and scientifically than was achieved by his forerunners in this field of literature.

Rajshekhra's *Kavyamimansa* was another famous treatise for the use of poets. In it, the writer gave in a compressed form different aspects of Poetry without dealing *Rasa*, *Guna*, and *Alankara* in a direct way. His definition of poetry was a stanza containing qualities and figures. He had a contemporary, named Mukulabhatta, who wrote *Abhidavrittimitrika* dealing with *Abhida* and *Lakshana*. Bhatta Tauta composed *Kavyakautuka*. His disciple Abhnava Gupta wrote *Lochana* and defined *Protbha*. According to him his master Bhatta Tauta occupied the most important place among advocates of *Rasas*. Another writer Mammatta made a clear distinction between figures and qualities. To him three qualities were based on how the letters were compounded and the style arranged bringing the poem into a perfect shape.

Anandavardhana wrote *Dhvanyaloka*, in which he gave a full and complete exposition of *Dhvani*. This work was divided into *Karika*,



*Vritti* and *Udaharana*. There is a confusion about the authenticity of the writer of the first two sections. Jagannatha Pandit, the greatest rhetorician called *Dhvanyaloka* as the last word on the poetics.

The poetics made great progress in a systematic way in the hands of many scholars starting from figures to *Dhvani* as the soul of the poetry. *Rasa* propounded by Bharata for drama, was accepted in verse by champions of *Dhvani* after centuries of labour. *Alankara*, of course, remained as an accepted factor in the art of poetry when *Rasa* was thrown into oblivion. *Alankara* led to the growth of *Sabdalanakara* through the figures of speech and *Chitrakavya* growing out of *Sabdalanakara*, though eclipsed by *Dhvani* was not effaced altogether. *Alankara* brought *Rati* in its turn and ultimately *Dhvani* was accepted as the essence or soul of poetry.

#### H. Astronomy and Astrology

*Astronomy* and *Astrology* have been wedded together in India, since immemorial times. The former had been referred to as an incidental off spring of *Astrology* from which it emancipated under the influence of *Yavanas* i. e. the Greeks. The growth of *Astronomy* was the outcome of the worship of planets and their movements. Since the *Vedic* period the auspicious time for the performance of *Yajnas* and other sacred rites have been determined by the respective position of planets in the solar system. In every *Veda* there is a reference to astronomical treatise, in which it is explained the calendar for the fixation of the time for the performance of religious duties. This science was the favourite pursuit of the Brahmins. In the ancient *Brahmanas*, it is stated that there is no rising or setting of the sun and days and nights are the result of the revolving movement of the solar system. Many planets were known to the ancient people of India according to the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*.

About the discovery of planets Weber writes :—‘Whether Hindus discovered the planets independently or whether the knowledge came to them from without, cannot as yet be determined, but the systematic peculiarity of the nomenclature points in the mean time to the former view.’

*Jyotish Vedanga* was a small treatise in seventy nine *slokas* in the recensions of the *Rig Veda* and the *Yajurveda* dealing with *Naksatras*, the *Yuga*, the position of the sun and moon at the solastics and the new and full moon in the circle of the *Naksatras*. In the *post-Vedic* period, the *Vrddhagarga-samhita* and *Suriya-pannati* were treatises on *Astronomy*. The *Epics*, the *Puranas* and other *Dharmasastras* were full of their

references.

With the coming of the Greeks in India before the Christian era, a new zeal was infused in the development of this science. The *Sidhantas*, numbering five, were the earlier astronomical treatises based on Greek knowledge. Varahamihira, who compiled the *Panch Sidhantas* in 504 A. D. brought a complete system of natural Astrology. In *Panch-Sidhantas* he admitted without reservation that his knowledge about astronomy was based on Greek knowledge and preserved it in his work the five *Sidhantas*. He referred to a few Indian astronomers among whom Arya Bhatta stood as a great figure.

The *Sidhantas* were in the names of *Surya*, *Paitamaha*, *Paulisa*, *Vasistha* and *Romaka*. The *Romaka* and *Paulisa Sidhantas* were foreign in origin as their names implied. *Romaka* was after the Roman Empire and *Paulisa*, according to Alberuni was written by *Paulus al Yunani*.

The *Surya Sidhanta* was a composition in *Slokas* in four parts which underwent many changes in course of time. *Surya* was stated to have revealed the *Sidhanta* to *Asura Maya* and occupied the most important position, as the other four *Sidhantas* were lost for all practical purposes except through references made by later writers. *Paitamaha* belonged to a period when science had not established itself in India.

There was an apparent difference between the Indian and Greek ideas about Astronomy. *Surya Sidhanta*, though in general agreed with Ptolemy's observation, yet it had difference in many respects. It has been argued by scholars that the amount of Grecian influence in Indian astronomical thought could not be estimated correctly. Macdonell says that the uncertainty is all the greater since we have no more of the date of the five *Sidhantas* than that they were regarded by Varahamihira as authoritative works.

Arya Bhatta, a predecessor or a contemporary of Varahamihira wrote *Arya Bhatiya*. He was an eminent astronomer and a mathematician born at Kusumapura or Pataliputra in the last quarter of fifth century A. D. In addition to that book, he produced two other outstanding works viz, *Dasagitikasutra* and *Aryashtasata*. He gave a separate entity to mathematics as a subject. The *Arya Bhatiya* written in Arya metre contained four chapters in which he dealt with notation, offering his own conclusions, his calculation of astronomy and his knowledge about celestial sphere. This notation based on decimal system became the centre of attraction of the Arabian Muslims, who



carried it to the Western world. It was Arya Bhatta, who advocated that the rotation of earth was responsible for causing day and night. He maintained that planets like moon were not luminous bodies but it was sun which made them shine. According to him, the earth rotated on its spherical axis and the shadow of the earth on the moon resulted in the eclipses. He is said to be a contemporary of Paulus and was much influenced by the Greek knowledge of astronomy.

Brahma Gupta wrote *Brahmas phuta siddhanta* in 628 A. D. He treated the subject in a systematic and methodical manner. He being a scholar of mathematics dealt with astronomy attempting to solve many problems confronted by his contemporary astronomers. He mentioned the diameter of the earth as 1581 *yojanas*.

*Astrology i.e. Jyotisha* was very popular since the Aryan civilization got firmly rooted in India. *Jyotish* was a part of the *Vedanga* and no rites whether secular or religious could be undertaken without reference to good or bad omens. The *Yajna*, marriage, penance or any other undertakings by an individual or by the society as a whole, could not be performed without the favourable and auspicious coincidence of the stars and planets. Whatever might have been the development of Astrological science, it was an indispensable factor in human life and society. The advice of the astrologers were always sought by kings and common men both. Thus astrologers were always maintained by the kings at their court and much patronage they got from all sections of the people. The Brahmins were principally in this profession and it was during the prevalent supremacy of *Buddhism* that their hold was considerably lessened because *Buddhism* had no belief in its efficacy.

Varahamihira was a great authority in this science. His astrological knowledge eclipsed all other astrological knowledge which cropped up before his time. He wrote *Brahtsamhita* an astrological work on poetical style and merit. His other works were *Yoga-Yatra*, *Jyotish-Shastra*, *Brhajjataka*, *Hora Shastra* and *Laghu-Jataka*, in which he explained the technique of foretelling about the future of living beings.

Bhattotpala was another famous astrologer who wrote *Horasastra* and commented on Varahamihira's work in the tenth century. This editor after a deep and thorough study of existing works gave new interpretation to the subject. He also revised a text of Kalyan Verman written in the seventh century A.D.

### I. Mathematics

The treatment of Astronomy and Astrology cannot be complete if mathematics is not dealt with. Moreover, Arithmetic

Algebra and Geometry have descended from Astronomy. The famous works on the subject are *Aryabhatiya* (first two parts), *Ganitadhyaya*, *Kuttakadhyaya*, a part of *Brahma-Sphuta-Siddhanta*, *Lilavati* and *Bijaganit*.

Arya Bhatta wrote a chapter on mathematics in his work on Astronomy. He was the first to invent Algebra. He dealt with evolution and involution, area and volumes, progression, square roots, cub roots. His *bijaganit* was a comprehensive Algebra written systematically. The science of Algebra was at its height during his life time and he proved to be a real forerunner of the later writers like Brahma Gupta and Bhaskara. Brahma Gupta dealt with formulas of ordinary arithmetical operation. Negative numbers were known to him which he used in Algebra to have one form. His work *Brahma-Sphuta-Siddhanta* was a fine work of scientific investigation excluding Astronomy.

The *Ganitsara-samgraha* of Mahaviracharya was a work on Geometry having examples of indeterminates which he wrote in the ninth century A.D.

India made marvellous progress in the three branches of mathematics since the *Vedic* period. The Geometry could be traced to *Sulva Sutras* in which were given certain rules for the construction of sacred altars. The Brahmins who built *Yajna* altars knew how to construct squares, rectangles, triangles and circles. The Geometry in its elementary state existed in the *Vedic* periods. Trigonometry was also within the knowledge of the ancient Indian Aryans. They had the credit of inventing zero with the cardinal numbers 1 to 9 along with the method of division and rule of three. The Arabs carried the Indian numerals and decimal notation to their country and pushed those to West.

### J. Medicine

The charms of curing ailment through magical powers which have been narrated in the *Atharva Veda*, and Ayurveda the science of longevity known as *Upangas* have formed the basis of indigenous system of medicine since the earliest history of India. Although it was in primitive form, yet the science of anatomy, embryology and hygiene were found in the pages of the *Vedas*. The bones of human skeleton have been mentioned in detail in the *Atharva Veda* and *Satapatha Brahmana*.

From the *Jatakas* and other *Buddhist* literature it could be ascertained that medicine as a subject was very popular with the Indians of those days. Taxila (Takshsila) was a great centre of attraction for the students who came from far and near to get medical education. Jivaka, a noted physician was stated to have performed great surgical operations.



An old manuscript in Sanskrit found in Chinese Turkistan in 1790, in seven texts, three of which written on medicine, indicated the interest the ancient people took in the science of medicine. It is said that they knew the preparation of acids and also used minerals to cure diseases. Their surgical knowledge and skill were also advanced as the number of instruments to perform operation was 127 even at that ancient time. The physicians were used to diagnose illness by feeling of the pulse and other observations necessary to detect illness.

In ancient time Charaka, Susruta and Vagbhata were known for their knowledge in medical science and their names are found in the *Samhitas*. Susruta was reported to have been a surgeon while Charaka was in medicinal line. In their written works, they left their developed knowledge in a systematic and simple language. Charaka was the court physician of king Kanishka. Charaka admitted indebtedness to his predecessor Agnivesa, a pupil of Atreya, the founder of ancient Indian medical science. Charaka's book was in eight parts written in prose. Dridhabala was said to have edited one third of the work in 800 A.D. Charaka was a philosopher and a humanitarian too. He was well versed with the philosophies of Sankhya, Nyaya and Vaiseshika.

Vagbhata wrote *Astangasamgraha* and *Astangahrdaya Samhita* in prose and verse both. According to I—Tsang the former work was written at the end of the sixth century A.D. Chakrapanidatta wrote commentaries on the works of Charaka and Susruta, along with his independent works of abiding interest on medicine. *Chikitsasamgraha* which he wrote was notable for metallic preparation. His *Sabdachandrika* contained vocabulary on minerals and vegetables and *Dravyagunasamgraha* dealt with dietetics which were of remarkable importance.





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